

United States Senate

August 11, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-220, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

As you work on the next legislative package to address the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we strongly urge you to extend the statutory deadlines for the delivery of apportionment data and redistricting files following the 2020 Census.

On April 13, 2020, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they would be adjusting 2020 Census operations. At the same time, they had requested that the Congress extend the statutory deadlines “for apportionment counts to be delivered to the President by April 30, 2021, and redistricting data to be delivered to the states no later than July 31, 2021.”ⁱ This would have given the Census Bureau adequate time to compile the data sets in light of the delayed enumeration window. However, the administration has reversed course and shortened the enumeration period from October 31 to September 30, 2020, citing these statutory constraints.ⁱⁱ

Career Census Bureau staff have indicated that they cannot meet the existing statutory deadlines. In May 2020, the census official leading field operations, Tim Olson, stated, “We have passed the point where we could even meet the current legislative requirement of December 31. We can’t do that anymore.”ⁱⁱⁱ And in July, the associate director of the census, Albert Fontenot, said, “We are past the window of being able to get those counts” by year’s end.^{iv}

Extending the deadlines for the delivery of these files in the next COVID-19 relief package will ensure that the Census Bureau has adequate time to complete a full, fair, and accurate 2020 Census. It will also ensure that both the Congress and the states receive accurate data for apportionment and redistricting. We thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,


BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator


LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator



DAN SULLIVAN
United States Senator

/s/ Kamala D. Harris
KAMALA D. HARRIS
United States Senator

/s/ Dianne Feinstein
DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator

/s/ Richard J. Durbin
RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator

/s/ Jon Tester
JON TESTER
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth
TAMMY DUCKWORTH
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown
SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator

/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto
CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
THOMAS R. CARPER
United States Senator

/s/ Elizabeth Warren
ELIZABETH WARREN
United States Senator

/s/ Patrick Leahy
PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

/s/ Tina Smith
TINA SMITH
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator

/s/ Michael F. Bennet
MICHAEL F. BENNET
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed
JACK REED
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin
TAMMY BALDWIN
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator

/s/ Mark R. Warner
MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand
KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
JACKY ROSEN
United States Senator

/s/ Edward J. Markey
EDWARD J. MARKEY
United States Senator

/s/ Bernard Sanders
BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema
KYRSTEN SINEMA
United States Senator

/s/ Joe Manchin, III
JOE MANCHIN, III
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich
MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
JEFFREY A. MERKLEY
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden
RON WYDEN
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall
TOM UDALL
United States Senator

/s/ Jeanne Shaheen
JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine
TIM KAINE
United States Senator

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono
MAZIE K. HIRONO
United States Senator

/s/ Angus S. King, Jr.
ANGUS S. KING, JR.
United States Senator

/s/ Robert Menendez
ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker
CORY A. BOOKER
United States Senator

/s/ Maria Cantwell
MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.
ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
United States Senator

/s/ Margaret Wood Hassan
MARGARET WOOD HASSAN
United States Senator

/s/ Patty Murray
PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator

/s/ Gary C. Peters
GARY C. PETERS
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Jones
DOUG JONES
United States Senator

/s/ Debbie Stabenow
DEBBIE STABENOW
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher S. Murphy
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senator

ⁱ “U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham Statement on 2020 Census Operational Adjustments Due to COVID-19,” U.S. Census Bureau, 13 April 2020, <https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/press-releases/statement-covid-19-2020>.

ⁱⁱ “Statement from U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham: Delivering a Complete and Accurate 2020 Census Count,” U.S. Census Bureau, 03 August 2020, <https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/press-releases/delivering-complete-accurate-count.html>.

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- ⁱⁱⁱ “2020 Census Webinar: Census Bureau Roundtable Discussion.” *YouTube*, uploaded by National Congress of American Indians, 26 May 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6IyJMtDDgY&feature=youtu.be&t=4688>.
- ^{iv} United States of America, Census Bureau. “2020 Census Operational Press Briefing.” U.S. Census Bureau, 8 July 2020. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2020/2020-press-brief-july8.html>.