

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Moran, and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As you negotiate final spending for fiscal year (FY) 2020, we write respectfully to urge you to provide the Census Bureau with a full year appropriation in the next continuing resolution that includes, at a minimum, the amount unanimously approved by the Senate Committee on Appropriations—\$7.284 billion for the Census Bureau's Periodic Censuses and Programs account, with \$6.696 billion in new funding specifically for the 2020 Census. The decennial census is a constitutionally mandated activity, and the launch of peak 2020 Census operations is rapidly approaching. The Census Bureau must have funding certainty as soon as possible to ensure that its final preparations and early operations for the decennial census are not negatively impacted.

Unlike other agencies, the Census Bureau has specific constitutional and statutory requirements to conduct the decennial census on schedule. For example, the Bureau must deliver apportionment counts to the president by December 31, 2020—which determines the number of members of Congress that each state will receive. And by April 1, 2021, the Bureau must deliver redistricting summary files to all of the states, as required by Public Law 94-171.

As our nation's largest, most complex peacetime undertaking, the decennial census determines the outcome of apportionment and guides subsequent redistricting, directly influencing the composition of our representative democracy. It also drives more than \$800 billion annually in federal assistance to state and local governments. Failure to provide certainty of funding will impact final preparations and early operations—potentially depressing participation and increasing operational mistakes and failures in 2020. In turn, this would increase census costs by billions of dollars as the census unfolds, diminish public confidence in the results, and put a fair and accurate 2020 Census in jeopardy.

Further, an upfront full-year appropriation is necessary to shield the 2020 Census from funding constraints triggered by concerns about additional continuing resolutions or a government shutdown. It also provides the Census Bureau with the needed spending flexibility to meet emerging challenges in real time, such as modified preparations and operations in the many communities hit by natural disasters. The Census Bureau must be able to shift funds within its 2020 Census budget based on its best expert judgment of how to address challenges, threats, and operational progress in real time.

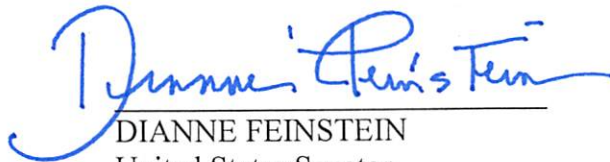
Failure to appropriate full funding for the Census Bureau for FY 2020 will impact, for example, recruiting, hiring, and training of field staff; verifying and updating the final address list; preparing and strengthening cybersecurity and other IT systems; completing robust advertising and messaging campaigns; and preparing for the launch of peak counting operations in remote areas of Alaska, which must start in January 2020. Each component of the decennial census is equally important and has been carefully planned out over the past decade.

An accurate count of all Americans is a constitutionally required activity, and we believe Congress must commit to a sufficient, timely investment in the decennial census.

Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator



DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator



JACK REED
United States Senator



TOM UDALL
United States Senator



TAMMY BALDWIN
United States Senator



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

United States Senator



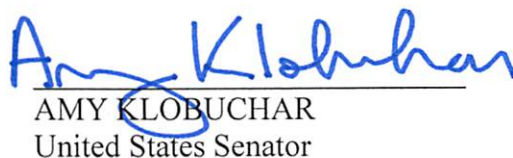
GARY C. PETERS

United States Senator



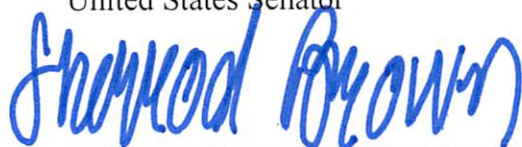
DEBBIE STABENOW

United States Senator



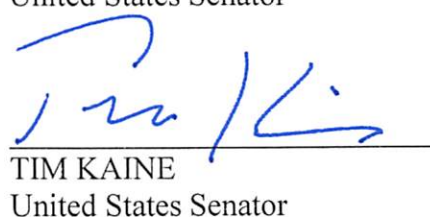
AMY KLOBUCHAR

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SHERROD BROWN

United States Senator



TIM KAINE

United States Senator



KAMALA D. HARRIS

United States Senator



EDWARD J. MARKEY

United States Senator



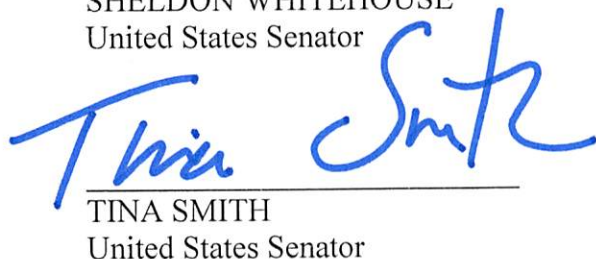
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE

United States Senator



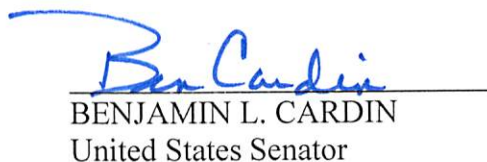
CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO

United States Senator




TINA SMITH

United States Senator



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

United States Senator



JACKY ROSEN

United States Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

United States Senator