

# 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.”<sup>i</sup> 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.<sup>ii</sup>

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.”<sup>iii</sup> 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.<sup>iv</sup>

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



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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

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<sup>i</sup> “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>.

<sup>ii</sup> “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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- <sup>iii</sup> “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>.
- <sup>iv</sup> 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>.