



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

September 6, 2017

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The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures, we write to urge the House of Representatives to provide sufficient funding for the 2020 Decennial Census. Congress must provide enough funding to the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure a fair and accurate count of the nation's people. Therefore, we strongly support increased funding for the Census Bureau in excess of the current \$1.507 billion contained in H.R. 3267, the "Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2018." This amount is woefully inadequate when compared to years seven and eight ramp-up amounts for prior decennial censuses.

As you know, the census must be conducted every ten years, in years ending in zero, and is conducted by a combination of returned household surveys and in-person interviews. All persons are counted. Some of the data is collected by mail and paper surveys. The 202 Census provides the opportunity to utilize the internet, but to do so it must complete testing of the program, which it is doing in three states. Non-respondent households are then visited in person by the census enumerators to collect the data. Testing new mobile technology as well as employing more enumerators require sufficient funding to ensure accuracy of the census.

Most importantly for states, the constitutionally mandated collection of census data has led state governments to rely on the data for broad-reaching policies. This reliance touches representation, infrastructure, and the social safety net. In addition to congressional reapportionment, some of the largest programs the federal government administers rely on census data to allocate appropriate funding, including spending in areas such as healthcare, transportation and housing. Recent census data analysis reveals that the largest program to base spending on census data is Medicaid, where approximately \$312 billion was spent. The federal government uses census data to fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (\$69.4 billion), Medicare Part B (\$64.1 billion) and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (\$11.1 billion). Census data drives the Child Care and

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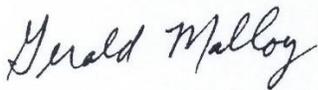
Development Fund (\$2.9 billion) and the Supplemental Insurance Program for Women, Infants and Children (\$6.3 billion) as well.

Various housing programs are census-guided. Funding for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (\$19.1 billion), Section 8 Housing Assistance Program (\$9.2 billion) and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (\$3.4 billion) or LIHEAP are allocated by the census data. The census also guides \$38.3 billion in highway funding to the states.

Education funding is heavily influenced by the census. Both states and the federal government rely on the data to allocate dollars. This funding from the federal government includes Title I Grants to local education agencies (\$13.9 billion), Head Start/Early Head Start (\$8.3 billion), Special Education IDEA grants (\$11.2 billion) and the National School Lunch Program (\$11.6 billion).

The census is a critical, constitutionally mandated program that affects all levels of government, and its administration drives billions of dollars in federal spending. The economic and demographic data collected shapes decisions for the next decade, and allows the study of larger trends throughout history. We respectfully ask that there be adequate funding to allow the Census Bureau access to full and accurate decennial census. Please contact NCSL staff Susan Frederick at 202-624-5400, or susan.frederick@ncsl.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Senator Gerald Malloy, South Carolina
Co-Chair, NCSL Law, Criminal Justice &
Public Safety Committee



Representative Craig Tieszen, South Dakota
Co-Chair, NCSL Law, Criminal Justice & Public
Safety Committee



Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto, New Mexico
Co-Chair, NCSL Redistricting and
Elections Committee



Senator John Murante, Nebraska
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