

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 18, 2019

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 Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Shaheen:

The launch of peak 2020 Census operations is rapidly approaching, and the Census Bureau must have certainty of full funding, as well as flexibility, at the start of the fiscal year to ensure that its final preparations and operations for the decennial census are not negatively impacted. Therefore, as you negotiate final spending for the current fiscal year (FY), we write to respectfully urge you to provide the Census Bureau with an anomaly in the first Continuing Resolution that includes a direct, full-year appropriation of \$8.175 billion as a minimum funding level, with \$7.5 billion in direct funding for 2020 Census operations, in the Periodic Censuses and Programs account.

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, which then 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 a government shutdown, and to provide needed spending flexibility to meet emerging challenges in real time, such as modified preparations and operations in the many communities hit by natural disasters (including those now recovering from Hurricane Dorian). 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.

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.

Failure to appropriate full funding upfront 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 2021. 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,



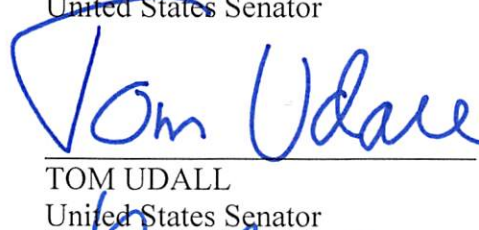
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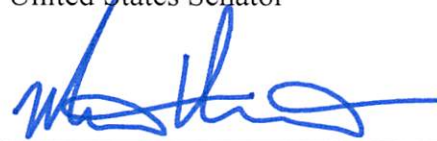
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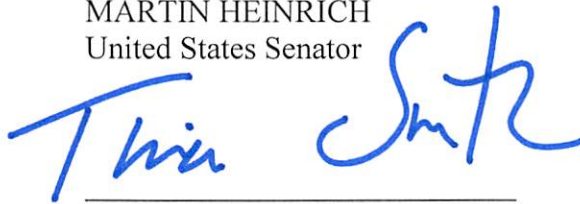
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United States Senator



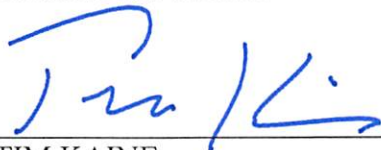
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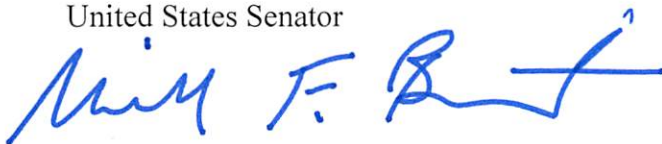
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