

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
U.S. Senate
230 South Dearborn St. Suite 3900
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Senator Duckworth:

As you know, Forefront's IL Count Me In 2020 coalition has spent the last few years actively working for a fair and accurate Census count in Illinois. We have also been working closely with other Census advocate organizations across the State. We want to thank you for your continued support and leadership in ensuring a full and accurate Census count. Collectively, many of us are writing to you in regards to the U.S. Census Bureau's recent statement reducing and rushing 2020 Census operations to conclude on September 30, 2020 rather than October 31, 2020. As Census advocates, we are concerned that this shortened period will affect the Census count in communities across the State, particularly in historically undercounted communities.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted Census field operations across the nation. In March 2020, the Census Bureau decided to suspend field operations to ensure the safety and wellness of their employees. This field operations suspension has led the Bureau to postpone many field operations such as group quarters (counting colleges/universities, jails, nursing homes, etc.) and the mobile questionnaire assistance program. Due to these field operations being postponed, the nonresponse follow-up operation is now under more pressure for getting a complete Census count. At the request of the Administration, the Bureau had extended the Census count to October 31 due to the pandemic. Now, the Administration is backing away from their initial request to extend the self-response period.

That said, the Census Bureau had previously indicated they don't have the time needed for a thorough enumeration of households that haven't yet responded on their own to the 2020 Census. Already, the 2020 response rates are behind the 2010 rates because of the deep impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, especially for communities that have been undercounted for decades. The Census Bureau is entering the door-to-door counting operation with the lowest response rates in recent memory.

In Illinois alone, the self-response rate is at 67.9% (as of August 5, 2020). Yet in 2010, we were at a 70.5% self-response rate. Illinois is one of many States across the country lagging behind in self-response rates. This rush to the Census puts our State in even more danger, as we are at risk of losing potentially two Congressional seats and billions in federal funds for necessary resources for residents across our State.

In the past few years, the State of Illinois, Cook County, the City of Chicago, and Forefront's IL Count Me In 2020 Funders' Collaborative have invested millions of dollars to ensure our communities are counted fairly and accurately. Through this investment, hundreds of Illinois Census advocates have been working tirelessly and diligently to get out the count.

Additionally, this recent deadline change now causes more confusion on whether communities should still respond. The Census Bureau and many advocate organizations have created and shared numerous materials with the October 31, 2020 deadline. With this latest change, this is an adding a layer of confusion. It is vital for our communities to get counted in the 2020 Census.

Given all these recent updates, we, IL Census advocates, urge the U.S. Census Bureau to strongly reconsider moving the full self-response deadline back to October 31, 2020. This October 31 deadline would allow more time for the Census Bureau to collect and process the collected data.

We, IL Census Advocates, appreciate you taking the time to listen to our concerns for a fair and accurate 2020 Census count. As Illinoisans, we deserve a full Census count for a better future.

Sincerely,

Forefront

ACLU of Illinois

Active Transportation Alliance

AgeOptions, Inc

Alsip Chamber of Commerce

Arts Alliance Illinois

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago

Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry

Aurora Complete Count Committee/College of DuPage

Aurora Public Library District

Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce

Aurora Township

BCMw

Better Government Association

Black United Fund of Illinois, Inc.

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council

Carl L. White Jr. Charity Golf Classic

Center for Changing Lives

Center on Halsted
Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
CHANGE Illinois
Chicago Commons
Chicago Reader/ CIMA
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Veterans
Chinese American Service League
Chinese Mutual Aid Association
City of Aurora
City of Aurora Interfaith
City of Berwyn
City of Champaign
City of Chicago Heights
City of East St. Louis
City of Harvey
City of Mt Vernon
City of North Chicago
City of Prospect Heights
City of Rockford
Common Cause Illinois
Community Assistance Programs
Community Organizing and Family Issues
Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago
County of McHenry
Cunningham Township
Eagle Christian Academy & Daycare

East Aurora School District 131

Elgin Complete Count Committee

Enlace Chicago

Equiticity

Erie Neighborhood House

Faith Coalition for the Common Good

Faith in Place

Family Focus

Far South CDC

Fathers Who Care

Fathers, Families and Healthy Communities

Ford County Public Health Department

Fox Valley United Way

Gathering Point Community Council

Greater Chatham Alliance

Habilitative Systems, Inc

Housing Action Illinois

Howard Brown Health

HRDI

IL Muslim Civic Coalition

ILCMA

Illinois Action for Children

Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Illinois Democratic Women

Illinois Library Association

Illinois Partners for Human Service

Illinois Primary Health Care Association
Illinois Public Health Association
Illinois State Data Center - Northern Illinois University
Industrial Welder Rebuilders
Introspect Youth Services, Inc.
Kendall County
Kendall County Complete Count Commission
Korean American Association of Chicago
La Casa Norte
Lakeside Community Committee
League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford
League of Women Voters of Illinois
Lee County Health Department
Lifebuilders Outreach Mission and Ministries
Lights of Zion Ministries
Literacy Works
LUCHA
Mano a Mano Family Resource Center
Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry
Men Making A Difference
Mercer County Better Together
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Midwest Asian Health Association
Montgomery County Clerk
Mujeres Latinas en Acción
Northwest Side Housing Center
Oakdale Christian Academy

ONE Northside

PASO - WEST SUBURBAN ACTION PROJECT

Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Opportunity (PCCEO)

Phalanx family services

Public Narrative

Quad Cities Interfaith

Quad City Community Development Center

Quad County Urban league

RAMP

ReadyNation Illinois

Real Freedom

Roll Call

Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference

SGA Youth & Family Services

South Asian American Policy and Research Institute (SAAPRI)

South Suburban Mayors & Managers

Southland Ministerial Health Network, NFP

Southwest Organizing Project

Spanish Coalition for Housing

Teens Against Killing Everywhere

The Neighbor Project

The Refugee Center

The Resurrection Project

The Southwest Collective

Total Resource Community Development Organization

Town of Cicero

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Trinity Services, Inc.

True Love Center

UIC Census 2020 Project

United Way of Lake County

United Way of Southern Illinois

Valley Industrial Association

Victory Christian International Ministries

Village of Alorton

Village of Alsip

Village of Bellwood

Village of Calumet Park

Village of Dolton

Village of Glen Carbon

Village of Hazel Crest

Village of Hoffman Estates

Village of Maywood

Village of Mount Prospect

Village of New Athens

Village of Orion

Village of Phoenix

Village of Richton Park

Village of Rive Forest

Village of Sauk Village

Vive En Forma

Voices for Illinois Children

Wayside Cross Ministries

Whiteside County Health Department



 ILLINOIS
COUNT ME IN
2020

Worth Township Supervisor

YMCA of the University of Illinois

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

YWCA of the Sauk Valley