**Census 2020 Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign Statement**

**on Rushing Completion Date of 2020 Census**

In April 2020, due to the suspension of field operations caused by COVID-19, the U.S. Census Bureau and the Trump Administration asked Congress to extend census operations until October 31 to allow for a complete and accurate count of peoples in the United States. On Friday, July 31, reports emerged that the Census Bureau would complete field data collection on September 30, in response to the Trump administration abandoning its previous request to have Congress extend census deadlines.

The Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign implores Congress to grant an extension until October 31, 2020, and uphold its constitutional duty to count “the whole number of persons in each state” to ensure a fair and accurate census. Rushing the timeline goes against the recommendations of experts within the Census Bureau and trained demographers. Michigan’s state demographer, Dr. Eric A. Guthrie stated:

“This action at the Census Bureau is the latest in a several years-long attack on what has been the gold standard operation in American statistical data collection. Ending the non-response follow-up (NRFU) operation early and without a well-conceived plan will undercount historically marginalized communities, short-change states and communities, and distort our perception of reality. Estimates vary, but federal funding tied to the census counts amounts to in excess of $1,800 per resident in Michigan. Additionally, this action will cause white residents to be over counted and communities of color to be undercounted, thereby thwarting future state efforts to craft policy that is meant to be representative of our state.”

Michigan’s 2020 self-response rates in historically undercounted communities already lag because of COVID-19’s impact. Rushing the deadline could undermine the health and safety of census workers and the American public. We cannot afford, amid a global pandemic, to short-change communities most affected by an undercount, including rural communities, people of color, senior citizens, immigrant communities, and children.

The pandemic has cast a glaring light on the impact of systemic and institutional divestment in historically undercounted communities. Rushing the census would put already vulnerable populations in danger of losing funding for education, medical care, and food programs for the next ten years, results that would be devastating for all of Michigan.

We encourage our nonprofit partners, who have already been extraordinarily committed to mobilizing communities, to double their efforts. We see over and over again, unconstitutional tactics being used to undermine a fair and accurate count. The consequences of an undercount are terrible for Michigan and the country. We can’t afford an incomplete count.

 

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