August 31, 2020

The Honorable Steven Dillingham

Director

U.S. Census Bureau

4600 Silver Hill Rd.

Suitland-Silver Hill, MD 20746

Dear Director Dillingham:

In light of the alarming news of efforts to rush the 2020 Census, we write to urge you extend the deadline for data collection to October 31, 2020.

We are troubled by your announcement on August 3rd that the Census Bureau would finish collecting data for the decennial count by September 30, 2020. This move will rush the enumeration process, result in inadequate follow-up, and exacerbate the historic undercounting of immigrant communities and communities of color. Senior career staff at the Census Bureau have publicly admitted that meeting the statutory deadlines is impossible because of the delays that have already occurred.

This decision to rush the Census in the wake of a pandemic raises concerns about the Bureau’s ability to accurately and completely count every person living in the United States. A rushed Census would hurt a diverse range of rural and urban communities, leaving them underrepresented locally and in Congress and cutting their fair share of federal funding for Medicaid, economic development, child care, schools, road and public transit improvements, home heating assistance for senior citizens, and other vital services.

The coronavirus pandemic has significantly challenged local governments' outreach plans that are essential to our efforts to reach hard-to-count communities. Low-response areas exist in every part of the country, in every state, in every city. Inadequate counting operations will most directly harm communities most in need of resources to improve safety, health, and educational opportunity. With nearly four out of ten households still to be counted, the agency has insufficient time to reach historically undercounted groups who require additional outreach.

We urge you to reconsider the unrealistic deadline for data collection of September 30, 2020, and extend the deadline to October 31, 2020.

Sincerely,

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