



**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
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Reducing the Undercount in the 2010 Census

**Before the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government
Information, Federal Services and International Security of the
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

**U.S. Senate
Field Hearing
Philadelphia, PA**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, I commend you for holding this hearing in Philadelphia, the birthplace of our country, our Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution, which mandates a census be taken every ten years. The 2010 census will mark the twenty-third time we will undertake that responsibility and pay homage to the founders of our republic who assembled not far from here 222 years ago. The founding fathers knew, as we know, that the fundamental principles of a democratic republic require equality of representation that can only be achieved through the most accurate population count possible. Today of course, the census serves many other important purposes but none so great as our Constitutional mandate. We who are privileged to do this work are ever mindful of the responsibility given us and I am delighted to be here today to discuss the challenges we face in accomplishing our task.

Our Philadelphia Regional Office is located here in the city and is headed by the Regional Director, Fernando Armstrong. Fernando began his Census Bureau career in Puerto Rico during the 1980 census. I want to thank him for his many years service to the Bureau and for being a leader in overseeing 2010 Census operations. The Philadelphia regional office is responsible for all Census Bureau activities in parts of New Jersey, all of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Washington, D.C. The regional office currently employs about 10,000 staff in the four-state region and our nation's capital.

Your invitation letter cited two specific circumstances of concern from the 2000 census: an estimated undercount for Philadelphia and a low mail-back response rate in Wilmington, Delaware. While the Census Bureau does not publish official undercount estimates for cities,

reducing undercounts and increasing response rates are among our greatest challenges and our highest priorities in the 2010 Census.

We are meeting those challenges with an array of specific strategies. In a very real sense, reducing undercounts and increasing response rates are component parts of virtually every operation we undertake, though that may not be obvious at first glance. For instance, we know that census participation is more problematic if someone does not receive a questionnaire because their address is not in our Master Address File (MAF). If we have no record of that address, it would also not be included in our Nonresponse Followup operation. However, our Integrated Communications Campaign outreach efforts will provide numerous other opportunities for people to participate in the census. For example by offering “Be Counted” sites and Questionnaire Assistance Centers in neighborhoods, even those that did not receive a questionnaire in the mail will be given an opportunity to participate in the census.

Simply put, the more comprehensive our address list is, the more complete and accurate the census will be. For this reason, the Address Canvassing operation currently underway is critical to the quality of the 2010 Census.

Early indications are that Address Canvassing is proceeding more smoothly and rapidly than we could have anticipated. I am advised, for instance that, as of last Wednesday, Address Canvassing operations in the State of Pennsylvania is 77% complete, with Quality Control (QC) follow-up operations more than half completed. Philadelphia is 99% complete, with QC follow-up at 80%. Delaware Address Canvassing operations are 99% complete, with QC follow-up at 83%; Wilmington Address Canvassing is 100% complete, with QC at about 80% complete. The Philadelphia Region as a whole is about 77% complete and QC operations are about 70%.

Of particular importance in urban areas, address canvassing operations will also, for the first time, include Group Quarters for special attention this fall. This operation will ensure correct location and address for college dormitories, nursing homes, boarding schools, and other like housing.

Selected areas in some urban environments will be targeted for another operation known as "Urban Update-Leave." Enumerators in this operation will hand-deliver questionnaires in pre-identified areas where we believe it will be difficult for the postal service to deliver to individual addresses, primarily due to having single delivery points in Multi-unit addresses. We will hand deliver questionnaires to those units. We are also working very closely with governments and advocacy groups in cities such as Philadelphia and Wilmington to identify and update our roster of the locations of shelters, soup kitchens and mobile food van stations in preparation for our Service-Based Enumeration Program.

Other improvements for the 2010 Census include using only the short form, which permits the mailing of 13 million bilingual, English/Spanish questionnaires to targeted areas. Questionnaires will be available in four other languages in addition to English and Spanish and language guides will be available in 59 other languages. Selected areas with low mail-back response rates in the last census will be sent a “replacement questionnaire.”

We are confident that these, and many other innovations and improvements over what we were able to do in 2000, will have a very positive effect on coverage, particularly in urban areas.

However, identifying where people live and getting a questionnaire to every resident is only half the battle. The second half is to overcome the challenges you rightly identify in the letter of invitation: response rates--convincing people that it is safe and important to complete and return the questionnaire. Convincing people to answer the census not only improves accuracy it produces an enormous savings to taxpayers. We estimate that for every one-percent increase in mail-back response rate, we save \$80 to \$90 million dollars in Nonresponse Followup costs.

We have made major advances in how we confront this challenge as well, beginning with a robust and innovative Integrated Communications Campaign.

The Integrated Communication Campaign

The Census Bureau's Integrated Communication Campaign for the 2010 Census is focused on accomplishing three specific objectives: to increase mail response, to improve accuracy and to improve cooperation with enumerators during Nonresponse Followup Operations. This program builds on the success of the Census 2000 plan, which helped reverse a two-decade decline in the national mail-back response rate. The program is multifaceted, employing and integrating paid advertising, public relations, and a very robust national, regional, and local partnership program, as well as a Census-in-Schools program. The program will use multimedia to reach people by television, radio, magazines, newspapers, outdoor and commuter media, the Internet, and through trusted voices in their local communities.

The cornerstone of 2010 Communications campaign is the availability of detailed tract level information derived from Census 2000 and the American Community Survey, which permits the campaign to identify and target the hard-to-count segments of our population within media markets and local communities. Using this research and data-driven process, for the first time, we can provide the right message, through the right media, in the appropriate language, at the right time. This also drives our decisions about where to concentrate partnership outreach in those pre-determined hard-to-count areas.

This program will be significantly improved and expanded thanks to the additional funding provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) which, as you know, was passed into law two months ago. We are grateful for the support Congress has given us.

Advertising Campaign

In 2000, the advertising campaign predicted response rates based on response levels of civic engagement and community participation. In 2010, we are taking advantage of detailed tract level information on mail-back response rate characteristics of households, rather than on surrogates of response such as voting. Using this data we developed "hard-to-count scores" for every census tract in the nation. We then used it to segment the population into eight relatively homogeneous groups, or clusters, that exhibit different mail response rates. The model has been enhanced by information about media usage and attitudes. Five of the clusters represent hard-to-

count populations that will be targeted during every phase of the campaign. Decisions related to budget allocation and media buys will be driven by the data.

DraftFCB, our prime contractor for the integrated communications effort, and their partner agencies developed the creative brief for the campaign and creative executions (television, radio, print, online, and outdoor and commuter) for the diverse audiences the campaign will reach. All creative executions were tested against our targeted audiences across the audience segments, and in 14 languages using focus groups. DraftFCB and their partner agencies conducted a total of 78 focus groups in 21 cities in the contiguous United States, Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico with a total of approximately 1,400 participants. The participants reflected the different races and ethnicities as well as traditionally hard-to-count and undercounted segments of the population. As you are aware, a few weeks ago we also demonstrated the creative executions to members of your Subcommittee staff and a wide variety of stakeholders. The production of the ads is scheduled to begin in June 2009.

The original communications contract was about \$216 million. The ARRA provides an additional \$100 million for the communications contract. About \$80 million of those funds will be used to increase our paid local and ethnic media buys. The remaining \$20 million will be used for promotional activities such as organizing and implementing the Census Road Tour; and to develop, print and distribute additional Census-in-Schools materials to schools in hard-to-count communities. In developing this plan, DraftFCB subcontracted with communication companies with experience and expertise reaching traditionally hard-to-count audiences. The targeted advertising builds on the mass communications plan with additional layers of advertising to deliver more messages in local, ethnic media in-language and in-culture. The original communication plan allocated \$39 million in local, targeted media buys. Using stimulus funding we plan to expend an additional \$54 million on media buys, \$11 million will be national buys and \$43 million will be allocated to local ethnically-targeted media. At its peak, we anticipate the plan will reach at least 95% of the population a minimum of 31 times. An analysis of the campaign's effectiveness will be conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, of Chicago IL.

Census-in-Schools Program

The Census-in-Schools program will be national in scope with an emphasis on hard-to-count populations. This program encourages students to tell their parents about the importance of the census. Within very hard-to-count communities, children are more likely to be in the cultural mainstream and can influence parents to complete and mail-back the census form. The program includes the development and distribution of electronic and printed materials. Scholastic, Inc. is working with the Census Bureau to develop materials for grades K-12 that include teaching guides, lessons plans, maps, brochures and take-home materials in both English and Spanish. The electronic materials will be available on the Census-in-Schools web site and on Scholastic.com where there will be space dedicated to the Census-in-Schools program. Parents, teachers, school board members, parent-teacher associations, and the general public will have access to these materials and will be able to download them for free. In addition, printed materials such as the mini-teaching guides, maps, and brochures will be distributed to all public and private schools for grades K-12 in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and each Island Area.

Partnership Program

While paid advertising can educate, inform, and motivate households and individuals, our Census 2000 experience demonstrated that Census Bureau partners at the national, regional, and local levels serve as powerful and trusted advocates that can help reach segments of the population not persuaded by advertising.

The partnership program's strategy is to engage and equip trusted leaders, particularly those serving hard-to-count communities, with a positive census message so that they can use their influence and existing networks to motivate their constituents to fully participate in the 2010 Census. One particularly effective method trusted leaders use is the formation and engagement of Complete Count Committees made up of community leaders representing faith-based organizations, schools, elected officials, community-based organizations, business associations, and local media outlets. Early partnership efforts have focused on the formation of these committees with local, state, and tribal governments.

In February 2009, a Complete Count Committee Guide was mailed to approximately 39,000 highest elected officials representing all state, local, and tribal governments. Regional partnership staff are now following up with these officials to urge formation of committees in support of the 2010 Census. Partnership staff are also providing training and technical support to Complete Count Committees during the planning phase in 2009, as well as ongoing support while each committee carries out their plan during peak census periods in 2010. During Census 2000, approximately 11,800 Complete Count Committees were formed and we anticipate local stakeholders will form that many, or more, during the 2010 Census.

To date, a total of 95 Complete Count Committees have been established throughout the Philadelphia region. Currently, Philadelphia Census Partnership staff have assisted in the formation of 36 Complete Count Committees in Pennsylvania, including 20 in Philadelphia. I believe my esteemed fellow witnesses; Mayor Nutter of Philadelphia and Mayor Baker of Wilmington are also contemplating forming Complete Count Committees, while Mr. Norman Bristol Colón, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs has already done so, and also formed a coalition of the Northeast State Latino Affairs Commissions on the 2010 Census. The Census Bureau and their constituents are indebted to them for their efforts.

Nationally, our Partnership staff have recruited more than 10,000 organizations that have made commitments to partner with the U.S. Census Bureau and we are just getting started. In Pennsylvania, Partnership staff have already obtained partnership commitments from 349 community organizations and leaders, including 89 partners in Philadelphia. In Delaware, 70 partnerships, including 35 in Wilmington have either been entered into or are pending.

I am proud to acknowledge the tireless work of our Partnership staff. It is not an easy job and requires equal parts perseverance, persuasiveness, and patience. Both the Census Bureau and the communities with whom these "Census Ambassadors" collaborate are better off as a result of their efforts.

Stimulus funding will permit us to nearly quadruple the number of community-based partnership staff. We expect to hire approximately 2,000 additional partnership staff in May and June 2009. Partnership staff, like all of our field staff, will be hired locally. They know the neighborhoods, the challenges, and the trusted voices in the community who can serve as effective partners. Mobilizing these additional resources will permit us to extend our reach into local communities and organizations, recruit more partners and provide additional assistance and support to an expanded partnership base. Mobilizing a larger and better-trained cadre of partners should help us meet the challenges of counting an increasingly diverse population.

We plan to spend over \$250 million on the partnership program, including \$120 million added from the stimulus package. This additional funding will give the Philadelphia region a three-fold increase in Partnership staff over what we were able to provide in 2000—from 54 to 145 staff. We are still in the process of fully gearing up to that total. Currently, the Partnership workforce in Pennsylvania and Delaware totals 76, with additional personnel coming on this month and next

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, my goal today is to make it clear that everything we do is focused on meeting our Constitutional mandate to count everyone living in the United States and in our territories. Our operations are not designed to count *most* of us, they are designed to count *all* of us. We recognize we must work harder to count people in areas that are difficult to reach. I believe we have, by any fair assessment, designed our operations to achieve the goal that was set out for us right here in this city so long ago.

This concludes my remarks and I look forward to your questions.

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