

United States Senate

September 30, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
101 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Dr. Steven Dillingham
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Secretary Ross and Director Dillingham:

We write to urge you to extend both self-response and field data collection operations to October 31, 2020, as you initially planned on April 13, 2020.ⁱ Extending the enumeration to October 5, 2020 is neither sufficient to prevent an undercount in communities across the country, nor does it comply with the September 24, 2020 order by Judge Lucy Koh in *National Urban League v. Ross*.ⁱⁱ

In staying the shortened timeline, and enjoining both of you and the Census Bureau from implementing the September 30, 2020 end date, the court built an extensive record of the impact that the shortened timeline will have. Judge Koh made clear in granting the motion for stay and preliminary injunction that the shortened timeline—ending self-response and field data collection operations on September 30 rather than October 31—“will likely result in an undercount in both the numbers that the Secretary reports to the States and the numbers that the President—who must draw on ‘decennial census data’—reports to Congress.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The court also enjoined both of you and the Census Bureau from implementing the December 31, 2020 deadline for the delivery of apportionment data to the President. However, in documents provided to the court, the December 31 deadline was a justification for the October 5 end date.^{iv} Thus your action runs counter to the court order. We strongly urge you to extend both self-response and field data collection operations to October 31.

The Decennial Census has a profound impact on both representation and federal funding for all communities, and must be completed in a full, fair, and accurate manner. It is imperative that you extend self-response and field data collection operations to the original October 31 end date, and continue to count people across the country until then. We thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your written response.

Sincerely,


BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator


LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator

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- ⁱ <https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/press-releases/statement-covid-19-2020>
- ⁱⁱ <https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Opinion%20on%20PI.pdf>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Opinion%20on%20PI.pdf>
- ^{iv} <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/7219683-National-Urban-League-Administrative-Record-for.html#document/p148/a583254>.