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Congress of the United States
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December 5, 2022

Robert Santos
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Director Santos:

I'm writing to follow up on concerns I previously expressed surrounding the repeated undercounting of Illinois in the American Community Survey (ACS), most recently in 2019, as well as in the 2020 Census as assessed by the Post-Enumeration Survey (PES).¹

As I discussed in my letter to you in January regarding the gaps between ACS data and the Census itself, ACS reports led to recurring stories over the last decade about the population decline in my home state of Illinois, only for the 2020 census results to suggest that those estimates of decline had been notably overstated.² In May, the Census Bureau's release of its estimated undercount and overcount rates from the Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) concluded that 14 states had an undercount or overcount, including Illinois, which was likely undercounted by 1.97 percent, meaning that Illinois not only did not lose residents over the last decade, but that its population is now the largest in its history with more than 13 million residents.³

In May, my colleagues from the Illinois Congressional delegation wrote letters regarding our concerns with the repeated undercounting of our state and its impact over the next decade on the use of the Census to allocate roughly \$1.5 trillion through approximately 100 programs, including Medicaid, SNAP, Medicare, Highway Planning and Construction, and Pell grants. More precisely, questions focused on how the Bureau would incorporate PES projections into its yearly Population Estimates which, by law, are "used to determine the amount of benefit received by State, county, or local units of general purpose government."⁴

We were grateful to you for your briefing us on the matter on June 16th of this year, as well as providing a written response to our concerns. You noted in your letter, regarding incorporating PES findings into data products that inform funding allocations that, "the Census Bureau has established a team of experts tasked with researching the feasibility of taking coverage measures from the Demographic Analysis and Post-Enumeration Survey into account in the development of the official population estimates." Similarly, when asked whether the Bureau would commit to taking into account the PES in Population Estimates from the Decennial Census you wrote, "While too early to commit to incorporating PES into the population estimates, the Census Bureau is researching the feasibility of taking coverage measures from both the

¹2019 ACS 5-Year Estimate Data Profile; <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/2021-population-estimates.html>

² Census Bureau Press Release, "Census Bureau Statement on 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Data", December 20, 2021

³ U.S. Census Bureau Releases 2020 Undercount and Overcount Rates by State and the District of Columbia, 2022. Post-Enumeration Survey (PES), May 19, 2022

⁴13 U.S.C. § 183

Demographic Analysis and Post-Enumeration Survey into account in the development of the official population estimates.”⁵

As the Census Bureau has had several additional months to further review its findings, please provide answers to the following questions in reference to your June 16th letter:

1. When will the Bureau’s research into “the feasibility of taking coverage measures from the Demographic Analysis and Post-Enumeration Survey into account in the development of the official population estimates” be complete?⁶
2. What will be the timeline for the availability of results and their potential incorporation into the official population estimates to ensure proper funding allocation for Illinois?
3. While you have previously noted general national factors for undercounting, what specific factors have contributed to undercounts in Illinois, both in the most recent decennial census and in previous ACS figures?
4. What, if any, specific efforts are underway that would mitigate or eliminate this consistent undercounting of Illinois?

Please provide answers to the questions listed above by December 19, 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raja Krishnamoorthi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Enclosure

⁵[U.S. Census Bureau Director Santos Letter To Senator Durbin And The Illinois Congressional Delegation, June 16, 2022](#)

⁶ [U.S. Census Bureau Director Santos Letter To Senator Durbin And The Illinois Congressional Delegation, June 16, 2022](#)