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Testimony: Senate Finance Committee
Article I Funding for the 2020 Census for Secretary of State 2020-2021

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The Center for Public Policy Priorities is an independent public policy organization. CPPP uses data and analysis to advocate for policy solutions that enable all Texans to reach their full potential. We envision a Texas where everyone is healthy, well-educated, and financially secure. To help reach this vision, the state should invest and commit to a robust 2020 Census plan to ensure every Texan is counted.

The Census is a constitutionally mandated count of the nation's residents. The 2020 Census will affect our representation in Congress, our federal funding for health care, housing, education, and transportation, and private-sector investments in our economy and infrastructure. A George Washington University report estimates that even a one-percent undercount could result in a **\$300 million federal funding loss for Texas per year** for the next 10 years. The burden will fall on state taxes to fill in the funding gaps for the next decade.

In the past, Texas Governors Clements and Bush issued executive orders to promote Census outreach by establishing State Complete Count Committees or directing specific agencies such as the Secretary of State's office to develop and implement Census information, including a Texas 2000 Census website. Twenty-four states have already committed to investing in an accurate count. For Texas to not fall behind, we must commit to a robust 2020 Census statewide plan that includes state funding to conduct census outreach.

Statewide Complete Count Committees do not have to involve expensive, multifaceted campaigns. Georgia, a much smaller and politically conservative state, allocated a one-time amount of \$2.25 million (20 cents per person) towards Census outreach. These funds were used to develop a website to prepare and educate residents on the 2020 Census and to support local communities' Census outreach efforts. The state was able to incorporate already prepared documents from the Census Bureau on the site, making it a straightforward and valuable resource in spreading 2020 Census information.

Georgia, like Texas, contains "hard to count" communities. These are communities that have low response rates to the Census and require targeted outreach to make sure they are counted. In 2010, significant undercounts for Texas occurred in rural communities, large metropolitan areas, college towns, and communities along the Texas/Mexico border. Funding from the state will make it possible for these communities to have a targeted outreach effort and likely reduce an undercount.

We recommend that the Senate Finance Committee allocate a one-time amount of at least \$6 million for an accurate census count across the state. We believe the Secretary of State's office is the best agency to implement a 2020 Census outreach plan and the agency would be ideal to distribute state funds to local communities to increase participation and awareness of the 2020 Census. An incomplete, inaccurate 2020 Census would result in a lost decade of federal resources Texans have been paying into and deserve to benefit from. It is in the best interest of our great state to have a complete count.

About CPPP

The Center for Public Policy Priorities is an independent public policy organization that uses research, analysis and advocacy to promote solutions that enable Texans of all backgrounds to reach their full potential. Learn more at CPPP.org.