



Testimony to Legislative Budget Board: Funding for the 2030 Statewide Complete Count Committee and Outreach

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The Census is a constitutionally mandated count of the nation's residents. The 2030 Census will affect Texans' Congressional representation, federal funding for health care, housing, education, and transportation, and private-sector investments in our economy and infrastructure. Every Texan recommends the LBB allocate a \$30-40- million allocation in the base budget for 2028-2030 biennium to ensure an accurate census count across the state.

The Return on Investment (ROI) in Census outreach justifies a one-time expenditure.

The Texas Census institute reports that Texas received \$150.3 billion in Fiscal Year 2020 through federal programs that relied on census data to allocate resources geographically. At the same time, Texas experienced the second-largest undercount in the 2020 Census (547,968 people were not part of the census count).ⁱ A 2020 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.ⁱⁱ This conservative estimate – now ten years old - demonstrates the burden that may fall to our state in order to offset funding gaps in the next decade. The Texas Census Institute spells out the consequences of the 2020 undercount in clear numbers:

“The 2020 Census Texas undercount cost Texas \$25.1B in federal funds during a decade, which translates into a loss of \$51B+ in output, \$23B+ in labor income, \$29B+ in GDP, and 384K+ jobs. Ensuring a complete count in the 2030 Census could let Texas access an estimated additional \$28.3B during a decade, resulting in \$57B+ in output, \$26B+ in labor income, \$33B+ in GDP, and 434K+ jobs for the next decade.”

It's clear the ROI alone justifies a budget allocation to ensure an accurate count.

Precedent Exists for Census Outreach

In years past, Texas Governors Clements and Bush issued executive orders to make Census outreach possible. The orders established State Complete Count Committees or directed specific agencies such as the Secretary of State's office to develop and implement Census information, including a Texas 2000 Census website. Twenty-six states committed to investing in an accurate count in the 2020 Census.ⁱⁱⁱ In order for Texas to keep



up, lawmakers must commit to a robust, statewide 2030 Census plan that includes state funding for census outreach. Statewide Complete Count Committees do not require expensive, multifaceted campaigns. Georgia, a much smaller and politically conservative state, allocated a one-time investment of \$2.25 million towards Census outreach. Those funds developed a website to prepare and educate residents on the 2020 Census and to support local communities' Census outreach efforts. The state incorporate readily available 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 where low response rates persist and targeted outreach is needed 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. Committed state funding enables communities to target outreach and reduce the likelihood of an undercount.

A Statewide Investment Supplements Local Efforts Where Needed

Every Texan, formerly CPPP, found that large urban counties were best equipped with the resources for countywide Complete Count Committees, but most rural counties were not. In addition to specific areas of the state that need support, certain populations are more likely to get undercounted including infants (0-5), renters, students, and severely underserved communities. To solve for the funding gap, Every Texan developed a robust philanthropic strategy in 2020. A state-funded effort for all Texans would ensure these rural populations are counted across the state.

The Secretary of State Can Lead the Way for Texas

Every Texan believes the Secretary of State's office is the agency best equipped to implement a 2030 Census outreach plan. The agency is well positioned to lead a statewide campaign or distribute state funds to local communities to increase participation and awareness of the 2030 Census. Given the 2030 Census will be a larger undertaking, Every Texan recommends the LBB allocate at \$30-40- million allocation in the base budget for 2028-2030 biennium for an accurate statewide census count. An incomplete, inaccurate 2030 Census will result in a ten-year loss of the 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.

ⁱ <https://texascensus.org/our-research/economic-impact-of-the-2020-census-undercount-in-texas/>

ⁱⁱ <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/counting-dollars-2020-role-decennial-census-geographic-distribution-federal-funds>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://apnews.com/general-news-5beb28776cd34e819c9b46ecda5334aa>