



April 15, 2020

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Chad Wolf
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear President Trump and Acting Secretary Wolf:

On behalf of the organizations signing this letter, we request that all immigration enforcement activities and operations of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) be completely and immediately suspended in order to promote an inclusive and accurate count of this country's population during Census 2020.

We are deeply concerned that the climate of fear and distrust within immigrant communities due to multiple immigration enforcement operations will deter immigrant and mixed immigration status households from responding to the Census surveys and from cooperating with Census outreach efforts. Although a "citizenship question" was not included in Census 2020, the proposal for it to be added has further exacerbated anxieties in immigrant-based communities about participation. A recent announcement that additional "tactical agents" will be sent to cities with sizable immigrant populations is a greater cause for concern that communities will be even more reluctant to participate in the Census.

As Census outreach builds to the official Census Day launch on April 1, we urge DHS to suspend enforcement operations prior to and during the national Census count.

This suspension of enforcement activity will support an inclusive and accurate count of this country's population. According to the non-partisan Urban Institute, "the upcoming 2020 Census could put more than 4 million people at risk of being undercounted in next year's national headcount." The Institute further warns that the 2020 Census could lead to the "worst undercount of Black and Latino people in the U.S. since 1990." (Diana Elliott, Robert Santos, Steven Martin, and Charmaine Runes. "2020 Census Who's At Risk of Being Miscalculated?" Urban Institute, June 2019.)

Historically, the Census Bureau has considered racial and ethnic minorities, including immigrant and non-English speakers as "hard to count" due to language barriers, immigration status, and housing stability. This year will also be the first time that the Census will be conducted online, and numerous public officials, at multiple levels, have raised concerns that getting an accurate count this year might be harder than ever. Additionally, in this environment, immigrant households may also have little confidence in the personal privacy protections of the Census.

A number of states and local governments have joined Census outreach efforts, providing supplemental funding. They, too, are alarmed that a Census undercount could severely impact government support for education, health care, affordable housing, employment and critical infrastructure in communities that are already under-resourced and marginalized.

Without a doubt, an undercount will have long-term negative consequences on all communities across the country, as well as on the democratic process itself; we urge your Administration to follow precedent and suspend all enforcement activities.

According to Congressional testimony, during the 2010 Census, ICE's predecessor agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Services, agreed to back away from conducting immigration raids during the Census. But we know that even "targeted arrests" have resulted in a high percentage of collateral arrests and detentions, contributing to widespread anxieties in immigrant communities.

The U.S. Census Bureau has been early and earnest in promoting the upcoming Census, but much more needs to be done. Many of us continue to cooperate at many levels to encourage and support inclusive participation. However, your Administration's unprecedented enforcement activities have created a fragile environment for immigrants and low-income communities of color. The numerous restrictive policies targeting non-citizens and three years of arrests, detention, family separation, unrestrained levels of deportations -- and the continued militarization of the border -- are real obstacles to an environment of human dignity, safety, and inclusion for immigrants and mixed immigration status households.

Given the immediacy of Census 2020, and the widely acknowledged goal to maximize participation by reaching "hard to count" populations, we the undersigning organizations urgently demand the suspension of immigration enforcement activities throughout the Census outreach period.

We look forward to your response and public statements on this matter.

Sincerely,

Allies of Knoxville's Immigrant Neighbors (AKIN)
All Saints Church
Alliance San Diego
American Friends Service Committee
Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian Law Alliance

Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)
Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests
Attorney at Law
Bay Area Resistance
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Boundless Zeal Project
Cambridge United for Justice with Peace Casa San Jose
Church World Service
Coalición de Derechos Humanos

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
 Coalition on Human Needs
 Colorado College Refugee Alliance Colorado
 Springs Immigrant Accompaniment Program
 Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd,
 U.S. Provinces
 Denver Justice & Peace Committee
 DRUM- Desis Rising Up and Moving
 Earth Evolution
 Edmonds Law Office of Civil Rights LLC
 El Pueblo, Inc.
 Eugene Human Rights Commission
 Farmworker Justice
 Filipino Advocates for Justice
 Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental
 Solidarity (FACES)
 Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS)
 Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
 Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
 Hispanic Federation
 Hispanic Liaison / El Vínculo Hispano Illinois
 Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
 Immigrant Defenders Law Center
 Immigrant Families Together
 Immigrant Rights Action
 Immigration Hub
 Indivisible Sacramento
 Infocannect
 InterReligious Task Force on Central America (IRTF)
 Khmer Girls in Action (KGA)
 Latin America/Caribbean Committee of the Loretto
 Community
 Latino Community Foundation
 Line Break Media
 Make the Road Nevada
 Mi Familia Vota
 Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance
 National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the
 Good Shepherd
 National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
 North Carolina Farmworkers Project
 NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
 New Bedford Coalition to Save Our Schools (NBCSOS)
 No More Deaths
 Occupy Bergen County
 OneEarth
 Orange County Racial Justice Collaborative
 Priority Africa Network
 Progressive Action, Global Exchange Progressive
 Leadership Alliance of Nevada Provincial Council
 Clerics of St. Viator Public Counsel
 Rian Immigrant Center
 Rights Action
 Sister Parish, Inc.
 Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
 Sojourners
 South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
 South Texas Human Rights Center
 Southeast Immigrant Rights Network
 Sisters of Saint. Joseph of Carondelet
 Saint Willebrord's Church
 Street Level Health Project
 Student Action with Farmworkers
 The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
 The Poor Peoples Campaign
 Twin Towers UMC
 Unites Students Against Sweatshops
 Women's International League for Peace & Freedom
 (WILPF)