

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2020

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

To Dr. Steven Dillingham,

We are writing to inquire about the steps that the Census Bureau is taking to ensure that the computers in public spaces can be properly positioned for the 2020 Census. The 2020 Census is the first Census that will be conducted primarily online. As we prepare to guarantee every American – especially those living in rural communities – is counted, we need to understand what devices, operating systems, and browsers the Census Bureau has used to test the online response option. Various community leaders have expressed their concern regarding the nature of the 2020 Census form’s formatting and optimization. Given the range of computers - some with hardware over a decade old – it is an issue especially affecting rural communities who rely heavily on resources in available community spaces.

It is imperative for public community spaces to have computers that are ready to support the completion of the census, particularly in rural communities where access to broadband is limited and that have been historically “hard to count.” Low-income communities and communities of color in rural areas are the most likely to be accessing the Census form on a public computer during the first wave of outreach. These constituents rely heavily on community spaces to have the technology necessary to access the Census registration forms.

Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Centers (MQACs) are meant to bridge the gap in “hard to count” areas. As of now, 1 out of every 9 Americans do not have access to the internet. Without the adequate number of MQAC’s, these areas could be under counted in the Census. Currently the amount of MQACs stands at roughly 4,500 units. This number is insufficient to count hard to reach communities and puts the Census at a greater risk of being incomplete. We therefore request responses to the following questions:

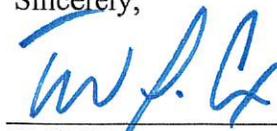
1. The Census online response form will be available online from March 12th onward. What steps will regional directors be taking to ensure that all public computers are able to access the 2020 Census form by mid-March? How late into the non-response follow-up period (NRFU) will the Bureau be accepting online responses, for example, from households that got a Notice of a Visit by an enumerator?
2. Has the Census Bureau assessed the ability of the current stock of public computers to access the 2020 Census?
3. When regional directors and their staff conduct visits to communities, how will they report their plan to reach every community? Will the reports be made public?
4. How will the Census Bureau ensure constituents learn about the availability of MQACs and where they are located? Is there a plan to increase the number of MQACs?
5. Can the Bureau verify there will not be an issue with multiple responses being submitted from the same device or IP address?

This year the Census Bureau was given \$6.7 billion for the purpose of conducting the 2020 Census. That funding provides an opportunity for the Census Bureau to remove barriers to completing the 2020 Census

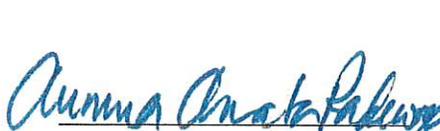
for "hard to count" communities. More than ever before, the Census Bureau is relying on technology to encourage Americans to self-report and assist them in doing so. A lack of access to public computers is a new barrier to an accurate count that will need to be addressed as part of the Census Bureau's preparations for the 2020 Census.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us or have your staff contact Nandini Narayan, nandini.narayan@mail.house.gov. We look forward to your answers and continued cooperative efforts and request a response by February 28th, 2020.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress



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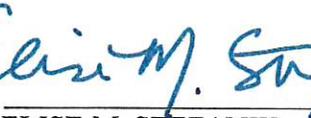
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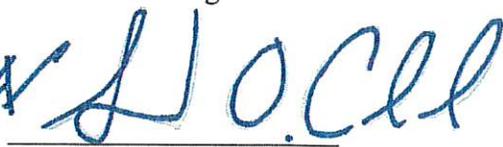
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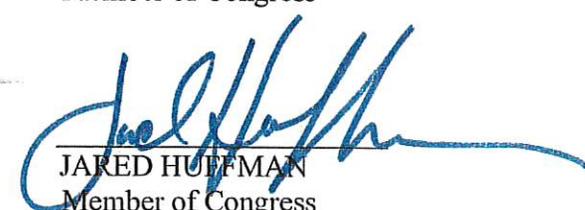
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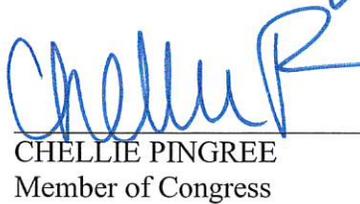


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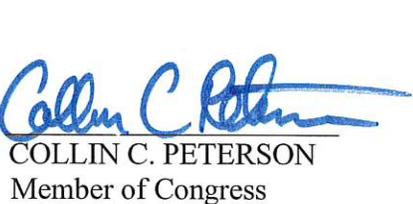

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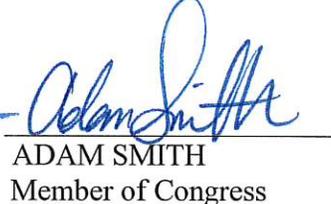

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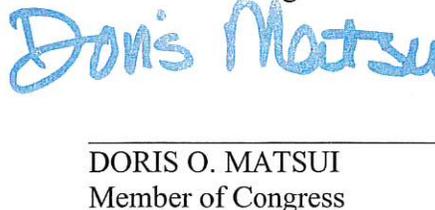

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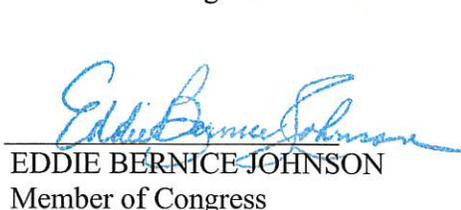

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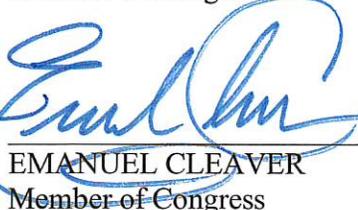

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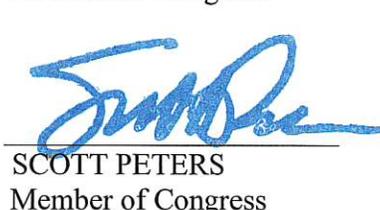

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