

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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March 24, 2026

Mr. George M. Cook
Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, D.C. 20233

Dear Mr. Cook:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is continuing its oversight of the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) to ensure that future censuses are conducted to the highest standards. Significant state undercounts and overcounts were revealed by the Bureau's Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) following the 2020 Census.¹ This and other matters demonstrate the continuing need for congressional oversight concerning the 2020 Census and the Bureau's testing and preparation for the 2030 Census. As the Committee with primary legislative jurisdiction over the census, we request information to assist our oversight work.

In advance of the 2030 Census, the Bureau plans to initiate on May 1, 2026, its first major test of "new tools and methods" that could be used during the upcoming census.² Given the substantial inaccuracies of the 2020 Census, particularly through significant mistakes in the counting of group quarters populations and the use of differential privacy methods,³ the Committee needs concrete assurances that the Bureau is building mechanisms into this and future tests that, if proven to be successful, could prevent renewed miscounts in the 2030 Census. The importance of this oversight work cannot be overstated. Because of the 2020 Census' failure to produce accurate state-by-state counts in the apportionment of congressional seats Colorado wrongly gained a seat, Rhode Island and Minnesota kept seats they should have lost, and Texas and Florida were not awarded seats they should have gained.⁴ Such miscounts clearly are avoidable, as no states had significant miscounts in the 2010 Census.⁵

¹ News Release, U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Undercounts in Six States, Overcounts in Eight (May 19, 2022).

² *2026 Census Test* U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (last updated: Feb. 2, 2026), available at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/2026-census-test.html>.

³ Wade Miller & Andrew White, *Policy Brief: The Census Bureau is Defrauding American Voters*, CTR. FOR RENEWING AMERICA (Aug. 7, 2025).

⁴ Hans von Spakovsky, *Census Bureau Errors Distort Congressional Representation for the States*, THE HERITAGE FOUND. (Aug. 2, 2022), available at <https://www.heritage.org/election-integrity/report/census-bureau-errors-distort-congressional-representation-the-states>.

⁵ See America Counts Staff, *2020 Census Undercounts in Six States, Overcounts in Eight*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (May 19, 2022), available at <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2022/05/2020-census-undercount-overcount-rates-by-state.html>.

Furthermore, the Bureau's partnerships with certain organizations in 2020 cast doubt on the reliability of the 2020 Census results. The Bureau enlisted many partner organizations to facilitate aspects of the enumeration process for the 2020 Census.⁶ Statements made by leaders of some of these organizations raise serious questions about those organizations' ability to remain non-partisan and unbiased in their involvement with the census. Corine Mack, President of Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP, for example, has stated that "[President Trump's] whole vision is to be just like Hitler."⁷ Marc Morial, President of the National Urban League, has insisted that President Trump was building an administration filled with white supremacists that would "reassert white privilege on every facet of society" and "purge the armed forces of top officers of color."⁸ The Human Rights Campaign expressed a clearly partisan stance against then-candidate Trump during the 2024 election, writing "Are you tired of waking up every day hearing about the latest hateful and divisive thing Donald Trump said?"⁹ The partisan nature of such statements from 2020 partner organizations calls into question whether all partner organizations fairly assisted the Bureau in ensuring a full and complete count of the U.S. population in 2020 and whether any such groups should not be engaged again as partners during the 2030 Census and tests leading up to it.

The Committee has already taken multiple steps to investigate what went wrong during the 2020 Census and the erroneous apportionment of congressional seats that followed it.¹⁰ The Bureau, however, was less than fully cooperative with the Committee during President Biden's administration. For example, on December 5, 2024, former Director Robert Santos testified before the Committee in an oversight hearing of the Bureau. During that hearing, Congressman Gary Palmer (R-AL) asked Director Santos to what extent the 2020 Census was conducted through estimates instead of direct contact with individuals.¹¹ Director Santos confirmed that a substantial part of the 2020 Census was based on estimates and said that he would provide documentation to the Committee detailing the basis for estimates.¹² However, the Bureau failed to provide that information to the Committee before Director Santos left office. Director Santos also said that he would be happy to provide the Committee with a full briefing on the Census Bureau's estimate methodologies.¹³ He failed to provide that briefing.

To assist the Committee's oversight of the 2020 Census and the Bureau's preparation for the 2030 Census, we request the following information and documents as soon as possible but no later than April 7, 2026:

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Partner Plan, 1 (March 10, 2019).

⁷ *Trump's 'Whole Vision Is To Be Just Like Hitler,' He's 'Trying To Create 1940s Germany' in the U.S.,* GRABIEN (Nov. 14, 2025), available at <https://grabien.com/story?id=556130>.

⁸ Marc Morial, *Trump 2.0 will work to impede racial justice*, CHICAGO SUN TIMES (Jan. 8, 2025).

⁹ HRC (@HRC), X, (Nov. 1, 2024), available at <https://x.com/HRC/status/1852350054784197012?>

¹⁰ See Letter from James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. On Oversight and Gov't Reform, to H. Robert L. Santos, Director, U.S. Census Bureau (Sept. 18, 2024), and see *Oversight of the U.S. Census Bureau*, 118th Cong. 2 (Dec. 5, 2024).

¹¹ *Oversight of the U.S. Census Bureau: Hearing Before H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform*, 118th Cong. 10 (Dec. 5, 2025) (testimony of Robert Santos, Dir., U.S. Census Bureau).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

1. All documents and communications related to methodological or other errors that contributed to state undercounts and overcounts in the 2020 Census, including but not limited to errors in enumerating group quarters populations and the use of differential privacy methodology, and an assessment of the extent to which those errors were associated with over and undercounts identified in the Bureau's Post-Enumeration Survey for the 2020 Census;
2. All documents and communications detailing any other issues the Bureau identified to be associated with mistakes made during the 2020 Census, including but not limited to all documents and communications related to material differences in non-response follow-up operations from state to state, duplication issues other than those associated with group quarters, and longer deployments of enumerators in hard-to-count urban areas than in hard-to-count rural areas;
3. All documents and communications pertaining to protocols, procedures, mechanisms, tools, or methods for data collection, data processing, or other matters the Bureau plans to test or otherwise implement during the 2026 and 2028 Census Tests to help guarantee enumeration errors experienced during the 2020 Census will not be replicated during the 2030 Census;
4. All documents and communications pertaining to any Bureau projections before the 2020 Census estimating or otherwise discussing where overcounts or undercounts might occur during the 2020 Census, what steps, if any, the Bureau took to respond to any such projections, or the degree to which any such projections coincided with actual state overcounts and undercounts during the 2020 Census;
5. All documents and communications pertaining to measures the Bureau took to ensure its partner organizations remained politically neutral and unbiased in their work during the 2020 Census and measures the Bureau is now taking to ensure any and all partner organizations remain politically neutral and unbiased during any and all work they perform during the Bureau's 2026 Census Test, other tests the Bureau performs before the 2030 Census, and the 2030 Census itself;
6. All documents and communications constituting or concerning reports, memos, analyses, or other evaluations prepared by the Bureau concerning the performance of enumerators during the 2020 Census, including but not limited to the Bureau's quality assurance process post-enumeration;
7. All documents and communications pertaining to delays in pre-apportionment work in 2020 and 2021 and whether or how they allowed the Biden Administration to make enumeration alterations affecting the ultimate apportionment of congressional districts in 2021; and,
8. All documents and communications detailing the extent to which the 2020 Census' enumeration was based on direct contacts with individuals versus estimates and the bases

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for such estimates, including all documents within the scope of Director Santos' aforementioned commitment to provide documents concerning such estimates.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. The Committee is also charged under Rule X with primary legislative jurisdiction over "[p]opulation and demography generally, including the Census." To arrange for delivery of documents and information or to ask any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Comer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "C".

James Comer

Chairman

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

cc: The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform