**Tribes and the Census**

**Congress Gives 2020 Census Budget a Boost**

With federal Fiscal Year 2018 nearly half over, the Congress has finally completed the appropriations process. Over the last two days both the House and Senate agreed on a Consolidated Appropriations Act for the full fiscal year. The President signed the bill into law this morning.

For advocates of a complete count in the 2020 Census, it is a moment to celebrate. The Act doubles the amount to be made available in the Commerce Department’s budget account that covers the upcoming decennial. The new law appropriates over $2.5 billion to that account, called the Census Bureau's "Periodic Censuses and Programs" account, instead of the $1.25 billion the Administration originally requested. The decennial census activity receives well over half of the funds in that account.

The emphasis that the appropriators in both houses placed on the next national headcount may bode well for the fight still to come over the budget for the 2020 Census in FY 2019. The budget in this account must be increased substantially over the currently pending Administration request in order for the Census Bureau to undertake all that's necessary to prepare for the next census.

What is especially significant for the tribes, off-reservation Indian groups in the "lower 48" states and all the Alaska Native tribes and organizations is the emphasis the appropriators placed on what are called "outreach and promotion" activities. These are intended to help insure that everyone participates in the decennial census. They include a "partnership program" to work with tribal governments and other Native organizations, along with other governments and community-based groups, to promote the Census.

Referring to the increased amounts the Act makes available to the Census Bureau, the official Congressional Report indicating the intent of the appropriators says this:

"These resources will also allow the Bureau of the Census to move forward with the timely execution of its 2020 Decennial Census communications and partnerships program to improve response rates and enhance trust in the Census. The Census Bureau is directed to insure that its fiscal year 2018 partnership and communications activities in support of the 2020 Census are conducted at a level of effort and staffing no less than that conducted during fiscal year 2008 in preparation for the 2010 Decennial Census." (Emphasis added)
The Bureau's compliance with this directive is very important. The agency has been planning to reduce its partnership staff significantly from what it was in 2010 as a cost-cutting measure.

If all goes as intended by the Report language, this should help tribes and Native groups in the increasingly important work of persuading every Native person to be counted in 2020 and counted as a Native person.

Support for more funding for the next decennial was emphasized by all the Native advocates who testified at a special hearing held last month by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. (See the February 15th issue of this newsletter for details.)

In addition to the testimony presented in person at that hearing, a number of tribes submitted written statements to the Committee and to its Chairman and Vice Chairman in support of full funding for the next decennial. Both Chairman John Hoeven of North Dakota and Vice Chairman Tom Udall of New Mexico serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee as well as the Indian Affairs Committee.

**American Indian/Alaska Native Population Projected to Increase**

The American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) population is expected to grow significantly over the next half century according to a set of population projections released last week by the Census Bureau. Adjusted to make the numbers comparable to those from the decennial census, the Bureau estimates the AI/AN only\(^1\) population in the year 2060 to be roughly 4 to 4.5 million nationally. This compares with the nearly 3 million counted in the 2010 Census.

The Bureau issues population projections on an annual basis. For each age cohort -- those persons born in the same year -- it projects the population year-by-year based on births, deaths and migration to and from the US. Adding up all the age cohorts produces a projection of the total population at the national level.

The same methodology is followed by Census Bureau staff for all population groups, including the AI/AN population. There is no separate analysis of trends specifically related to the Native population.

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\(^1\) Persons identifying their race on a Census form as only American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN). Such persons are termed AI/AN "alone" by the Census Bureau. Persons can also identify with more than one race. If one of the several races is AI/AN, they are called by the Census Bureau AI/AN "in combination" with one or more other races. In this newsletter they are generally referred to as the AI/AN multi-racial population.
The projected growth in the AI/AN only population does come with several important qualifying factors.

A major portion of the growth is expected to come from persons who identify as both AI/AN only and Hispanic. Currently, and continuing in the 2020 Census, the Census questions about a person's race and ethnicity (whether they are Hispanic or not) are separate questions. A person can identify as just AI/AN in response to the race question and identify as Hispanic on the ethnicity question. Such a person is still counted as AI/AN only in tabulations by race.

In 2010 about 685,000 persons identified themselves in this way, nearly one-quarter of those counted as AI/AN only. An analysis shows that much of this AI/AN only-Hispanic population is to be found in the major metropolitan areas.

Until the proposal was recently vetoed by the Office of Management and Budget, the Bureau had planned to combine the race and ethnicity questions in 2020 into a single question. This would have put those identifying their only race as AI/AN and also as Hispanic into the AI/AN multi-racial ("in combination") category, reducing the AI/AN only count significantly. The same or a similar idea might arise in a future decennial with the potential to make the AI/AN count substantially lower and not comparable with the counts from earlier decennials.

Another set of factors applies to the current AI/AN multi-racial population. The number of persons identifying as both AI/AN and also with another race grew rapidly from 2000, when persons were first permitted to say they identify with more than one race. This, like the AI/AN only-Hispanic population, lives primarily in off-reservation areas.

Although the recently issued population projections did not produce specific counts for the AI/AN multi-racial population, it is also expected to continue to grow, quite possibly at a pace as fast or faster than that of the AI/AN only population.

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