August 10, 2020

Dear Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal,

The numbers are daunting. Covid cases, unemployment, food insecurity, evictions, and foreclosures are rising across the nation. Our communities are struggling. At the same time, the Census Bureau has recently announced that enumeration for the 2020 Census will end one month early. The very programs that we need to bring our state out of this crisis—school lunch programs, healthcare services, education—rely on the Census Bureau meeting the Constitutional mandate of an accurate count of every person residing in the United States.

We are writing to request that Congress include language that would authorize a four-month extension of the 2020 Census statutory deadlines in the COVID relief package that is currently being negotiated. The House of Representatives already included this language in its latest COVID relief package.

As of August 4, nearly 1 in every 4 households in Connecticut and across the nation have not responded to the 2020 Census.

By rushing and underfunding Census 2020, Connecticut and the nation will be ill-equipped to meet the needs of its residents for the next decade.

Many of Connecticut’s cities, which are suffering the most from the Covid-19 pandemic, still have low self-response rates. Hartford has the lowest self-response rate of all cities in the country—only 4 out of 10 households responded as of August 2. In four other cities, only 6 out of 10 households have responded (Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury, and New Britain).

In fiscal year 2017 alone, Connecticut received approximately $18.9 billion in funding based on census numbers.

It’s not just the total dollar amount that’s important but who those dollars benefit. Ensuring an accurate count is about equity and thriving communities. It’s about making sure that your constituents and neighbors have the resources they need.
Without an accurate count, Connecticut municipalities, businesses, and community groups will not have the data and tools they need to inform their Covid-recovery responses.

When seeking federal funding, the state will not have the accurate census data it needs to direct funding in the most effective way possible.

When deciding where to build job-creating factories, offices, and stores, businesses will not have accurate census data to conduct proper market analysis.

When planning and preparing for emergencies, local governments will not have accurate census data to address public safety and public service needs.

When identifying community needs, nonprofit health and human service providers, citizen organizations, and philanthropic organizations will not have accurate census data to request and fund programs, and to assess program effectiveness.

When assessing or comparing the quality-of-life within communities, residents will not have accurate census data to understand and support advocacy efforts.

On top of all of that, an undercount could result in Connecticut losing congressional representation. Since the state has seen slower population growth than other parts of the country, an accurate count is crucial to our democratic right to representation.

Without a count that includes everyone, Connecticut could lose representation in Congress, much-needed dollars with wide-ranging impact, and access to accurate data to effectively respond to and recover from the pandemic.

That is why Congress must ensure that the funding level and the operational timeline matches the importance of the 2020 Census.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

CTData Collaborative