

October 2, 2026

Re: Docket No. 260903-0005, RIN 0607-AA75, Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Decennial Census of the Population of Americans; Proposed Residence Criteria and Proposed Regulations for Demographic Questions

To Whom It May Concern:

We strongly oppose the proposed changes to how the 2030 Decennial Census would count residents and collect demographic information. The proposal would exclude many community residents from the population count, eliminate the collection of race and ethnicity information, and prohibit the future collection of sexual orientation information. **Because Census data inform how communities are represented and resourced, an inaccurate count affects the systems and services that everyone in the community relies on.**

Founded in 1997, Prevention Institute is a national nonprofit dedicated to championing equitable health, safety, and wellbeing through upstream prevention and community-driven solutions.

Census data provide essential baseline information about who lives in our communities and how communities change over time. This information helps determine political representation and informs federal funding. It also supports planning for healthcare, schools, transportation, housing, and other community resources, all of which are essential for health, safety, and wellbeing. Communities and decision-makers rely on Census data to ensure that policies, investments, and services reflect the entire community.

The proposed rule would significantly undermine the accuracy and usefulness of Census data. In particular, the proposal would exclude broad categories of residents from the population count, including international students, H-1B visa holders, undocumented people, and other noncitizens. Excluding these residents would result in Census data that do not accurately reflect the full population of a community.

The proposal would also limit important demographic information about our communities by eliminating the collection of race and ethnicity data. In our work with communities and partners to improve health, safety, and wellbeing, we draw on multiple sources of information, including Census demographic data, to understand community conditions, assets, and public health needs. We consider these data alongside community history, relevant policies, and the experiences of people who live there. Taken together, this information helps us identify inequities and understand the structural and institutional factors that contribute to them. It also helps identify factors that may shape the implementation and effectiveness of public health strategies.

Race and ethnicity data are particularly important for identifying differences in health outcomes and community conditions across populations. Alongside other information about communities, race and ethnicity data also help us understand the factors that produce and sustain racial inequities. Eliminating these data would make racial inequities harder to identify and track. It

would also leave communities and decision-makers with less information to guide policy and systems changes that advance health equity and address racial disparities in health outcomes.

Prohibiting the future collection of sexual orientation information would unnecessarily restrict the Census Bureau's ability to respond to changing data needs. Decisions about future demographic information should be guided by research, testing, input from communities and other stakeholders, and demonstrated data needs—not foreclosed in advance.

We urge the Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau to reverse course and stop these proposed changes. The 2030 Census should fully count everyone who lives in our communities and preserve the demographic information needed to understand community needs and conditions. **A fair and accurate Census helps communities make decisions that strengthen community health.**

Thank you for considering this input.

Prevention Institute
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