

## Legislation Text

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Proclaiming the week of September 14, 2020 as “Census Week” in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, According to the United States Census Bureau, “the Decennial Census is the once-a-decade population and housing count of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Island Areas as required by the U.S. Constitution. The results of the decennial census determine the number of seats for each state in the U.S. House of Representatives and are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts and to distribute more than \$675 billion in federal funds each year”; and

WHEREAS, According to *The Atlantic*, “For most people, the census is a vague, decennial annoyance, nothing more.” But in reality, the census is vital to the country’s functioning. It’s not just a count of all households or a measure of American characteristics. It’s also an augur of political, economic, and cultural forces—a predictor and an allocator of power. In times of social upheaval—between political parties, whites and nonwhites, urban and rural areas, economic elites and the working class—the census can function almost like an umpire”; and

WHEREAS, Philly Counts 2020 is the City’s effort to support the next United States Census. By working closely with community members and partners, this program aims to increase understanding about the importance of the census, educate the public on how to participate, ensure responses from the public for a fair and accurate count, and support filling census jobs; and

WHEREAS, Philly Counts 2020, along with the Philadelphia Regional Office of the U.S. Census Bureau and community partners, have been working tirelessly to get all Philadelphians to fill out the Census. Each household can respond to the Census in numerous ways: online, over the phone, or even at various in-person events in the community; and

WHEREAS, According to *The Washington Post*, “The Census Bureau had planned to continue knocking on doors, along with telephone and online efforts, to obtain population data until Oct. 31 - a date that was moved back earlier this year because the coronavirus pandemic disrupted the agency’s field operations.” But on August 3rd, the U.S. Census Bureau announced it was ending all counting efforts for the 2020 census on Sept. 30th, a month sooner than previously announced; and

WHEREAS, While Philly Counts 2020, along with the Philadelphia Regional Office of the U.S. Census Bureau and community partners, have been doing an excellent job trying to get all Philadelphians counted in the 2020 Census, we now have less than a month to make sure everyone gets counted; and

WHEREAS, On September 4th, a federal judge temporarily blocked the administration’s order to wrap up the count a month ahead of schedule. There will be a hearing in mid-September for a lawsuit that seeks to scrap the expedited schedule altogether. However, the Census Bureau already has begun to dismantle counting operations in some places and results of the lawsuit will not be known for several weeks, so we must therefore continue to operate as if the deadline is September 30th; and

WHEREAS, While some areas of Philadelphia have filled out the 2020 Census at rates similar to the 2010

Census, some neighborhoods are still quite behind. According to phila.gov, there are very real implications for the City if not enough Philadelphians fill out the Census: “In the 2020 Census count, if just one person is missed, our City could face the loss of \$21,000 in federal funding over the decade. If an undercount occurs, the City’s capacity to meet the needs of all of its residents would be seriously impacted”; and

WHEREAS, While Philadelphians are running out of time to complete the 2020 Census, there is still time. Philadelphia must do everything it can to ensure as many Philadelphians as possible are counted by the deadline of September 30th; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby proclaims the week of September 14, 2020 as “Census Week” in Philadelphia.