

# OVERSIGHT OF THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

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## HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

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## OVERSIGHT OF THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

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Thursday, December 5, 2024

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
*Washington, D.C.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in HVC-210, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. James Comer, [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Jordan, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Greene, Fry, Raskin, Norton, Lynch, Connolly, Ocasio-Cortez, Brown, Stansbury, Frost, Lee, Casar, Crockett, Goldman, Tlaib, and Pressley.

Chairman COMER. The hearing of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability will come to order.

We want to welcome everyone here to our new Committee room for the next, hopefully not more than 12 months, while our old Committee room is under construction.

Without objection, the Chair may declare recess at any time.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Welcome to today's hearing on the U.S. Census Bureau with Director Robert Santos. The Census Bureau conducts several surveys and statistical products, but none is more important than the Decennial Census of the U.S. population. Article I of the U.S. Constitution requires Congress to ensure a population Census is taken every 10 years to serve as the basis for apportioning representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and allocating electoral college votes. It also informs how Congress allocates funds and how Federal agencies achieve their missions for the American people.

Today, we will examine the Census Bureau's ongoing planning and preparation for the 2030 Census. While this event is still 5 years away, preparation for the 2030 Census has already begun. Counting more than 330 million people is a massive undertaking. It requires engagement with national, state, and local stakeholders to encourage full participation, and it also requires the Census Bureau to leverage lessons learned from the 2020 Census. Unfortunately, the 2020 Census was flawed in ways not seen in prior Censuses. The Census Bureau's Post-Enumeration Survey, which measures Census count accuracy, revealed significant errors in 14 states. Significant errors. These errors predominantly benefited Democrat-leaning states in the allocation of congressional seats

and electoral college votes. In contrast to the 2020 Census, no states were found to have had such errors in the 2010 Census, but in 2020, the Post-Enumeration Survey suggests there were overcounts in New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Delaware, Minnesota, Utah, and Ohio, and there were undercounts in Texas, Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Illinois.

Six of the eight states benefiting from overcounts tended to favor Democrats in awarding congressional apportionment and electoral college votes. Meanwhile, five of the six states that were unfairly penalized by undercounts tended to vote overwhelmingly Republican. These miscounts had a huge impact on representation. Small numbers of proportional differences in population between states can impact the apportionment calculation. In the 2020 apportionment, a difference of only 89 people was the tipping point for New York being apportioned 26 seats instead of 29, just 89 people—89 people—in the state of New York. Based on the 2020 Post-Enumeration Survey, it is likely that miscounts caused Colorado to gain a seat it would have not gained otherwise, and for Rhode Island and Minnesota—Rhode Island and Minnesota—to each keep a seat they would have lost. Meanwhile, Texas and Florida likely should have gained a seat. If anybody has been to Texas and Florida lately and been to Rhode Island and Minnesota lately, I would beg to differ that there is a significant difference in the growth and population increases in those states.

It is imperative that we understand what went wrong in the 2020 Census and take action to mitigate the risk of those similar errors in the 2030 Census. Mitigating these risks is even more important because there are major demographic changes happening across the country as citizens of blue states flee from those high-tax sanctuary jurisdictions for red states to enjoy lower taxes, a safer environment, and to exercise more freedom. Finally, the Equal Representation Act, passed out of this Committee and by the House earlier this year, is critical to ensuring fairness in our electoral process. This legislation adds a straightforward citizenship question to the Decennial Census questionnaire to ensure accurate information. It also ensures that only U.S. citizens are counted for apportionment of congressional seats and electoral college votes. American citizens' Federal representation should be determined by American citizens only. We must get this bill passed by Congress and signed into law.

I look forward to hearing from Director Santos today about the Census Bureau's efforts to prepare for the 2030 Census and ensure its success and accuracy. I now yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and thanks to you, Director Santos, for joining us here this morning.

The Census is an essential Decennial constitutional function insisted upon by the founders in designing a government of We the People, and the Census was conducted and designed in 2020 under the Trump Administration, not under the Biden Administration. And, of course, as the Chairman says, there is demographic movement in America, in a free society where people have a constitutional right to travel across state lines and to move. There is always demographic movement, and the Chairman suggests people

are fleeing taxes in the blue states. I know there are people fleeing the anti-abortion restrictions in red states because I have met a lot of them over Thanksgiving, actually, young women who do not want to live in the red states under the new regime of state legislative theocratic control over the bodies of women, but in any event, that is all part of the normal course of demographic movement. Americans can decide to live where they want to live.

Now the Bureau faced some giant and unprecedented challenges in conducting the 2020 Census. It took place in the COVID-19 global pandemic, which significantly complicated the work of Census staff as huge parts of the public were worried about contracting COVID-19. It severely affected the work of the Census. Many Census activities were suspended or shifted, and in many states and localities, lockdowns and travel restrictions stopped the Census Bureau from accessing entire communities and neighborhoods. A number of other problems caused by the pandemic further affected the count, such as double counting people who had temporarily moved in with their family or friends to try to survive the crisis, or college students being counted twice after being sent home from school mid-semester, or not being counted at all if they were missed. Overcounts can occur when members of a family with a second home list their primary address in different ways or when a landlord lists a tenant as living in an apartment, even if the tenant lists another residence as their primary address if they have gone to try to wait out the epidemic in a different place. Overcounts and undercounts are not a new problem. They are a traditional problem, a longstanding problem, as the GAO says, but there is always a new variety of challenges in different settings, and obviously the disastrous response of the Federal Government to COVID-19 deeply complicated the work of the Census Bureau.

The Census also had to contend with hurricanes and wildfires affecting a number of different states, and it was conducted following limited tests because of substantial budget cuts that had taken place in the years before the Census. There is no reason to see these undercounts and overcounts as anything more than the normal kinds of errors made during exceptionally difficult circumstances. But the usual profusion of conspiracy theories have proliferated from people not interested in making the Census work better, but simply in scaring the public and dividing people along party lines.

The Post-Enumeration Survey is only intended to measure accuracy for a subset of the population. For example, it does not include people living in college dorms or people living in military barracks. Moreover, it draws its conclusions from a very small survey of 170,000 housing units out of 145 million in the country. In other words, the Post-Enumeration Survey is a tool to help inform and guide future Census activities. It is not a recount of the Census, nor can it be or should it be used to supplant or alter actual Census data for purposes of apportionment and distribution of government funds.

I appreciate the Chairman calling this hearing today because we should all want a complete and accurate 2030 Census, but the solutions to achieve it are not really a mystery. Instead of cutting funding for the Bureau, as House Republicans have tried to do this year

and years past, we need to make sure it has the resources it needs to conduct the planning and preparatory work that are essential to a truly successful count. Instead of threatening to add a citizenship question to the Census, which experts have warned will depress participation, we should support the Census Bureau in fulfilling the clear mandate of counting the whole number of persons in each state set forth in the Constitution.

The Census must be an independent, nonpolitical exercise conducted by statisticians and qualified professionals, not an arm of the political office of whichever administration happens to be in charge, and we must ensure that the Census never becomes an authoritarian tool of fear and control, which is what it is in authoritarian societies. The Census must always remain a tool to nourish and improve our democracy by empowering Americans through equal representation and equal access to resources and opportunity. The Census plays a critical role in our democracy, guaranteeing there will be a fair allocation of House seats in the country and House districts of equal population within each state. It also assures that government resources and benefits will be distributed fairly. It is not easy to count 334.9 million people in the world's greatest multiracial, multiethnic constitutional democracy, and the Census must constantly improve its methods. This should be the grounds for analysis and serious conversation, not partisan-motivated conspiracy theory and fearmongering.

Thank you, Director Santos, for your hard work, and thank you, Mr. Chairman for calling this meeting, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Today we are joined by the Honorable Robert L. Santos, who is the 26th Director of the U.S. Census Bureau. Director Santos was sworn into his current role on January 5, 2022, and leads over 4,000 staff members conducting the business of the Census Bureau. He joins us today with over 4 decades of experience conducting survey research, statistical design and analysis, and experience with executive management.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witness will please stand and raise his right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Director SANTOS. I do.

Chairman COMER. Let the record show that the witness answered in the affirmative. Thank you, and you may take a seat.

We appreciate you being here today, Director, and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind you that we have read your written statement, and it will appear in full in the hearing record. Please limit your oral statement to 5 minutes. As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on, and the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After 4 minutes, the light will turn yellow. When the red light comes on, your 5 minutes have expired, and we would ask that you please try to wrap it up.

I now recognize Director Santos for his opening statement.



**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT L. SANTOS  
DIRECTOR  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU**

Director SANTOS. Good morning, Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin, and Members of the Committee. I am honored to be here today to relay the importance of the Census Bureau's work. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about the challenges and opportunities that we face. We embrace our public service role and our special mission to provide quality statistical data about our Nation's people, places, and economy. We very much appreciate this Committee's vital role in facilitating our mission as well as supporting our efforts.

The Census Bureau applies the best science, the best methods, the best technology available to advance our mission. Our work remains and must always be nonpartisan. In fact, we take great pride in being a nonpartisan Federal statistical agency. Our core values are scientific integrity, objectivity, transparency, and independence, and we live those values in all we do. As Director, I focus on where we are going and how we can get there nimbly, effectively, and efficiently.

The Census Bureau enjoys a legacy of innovation. It is a legacy we are proud of. We face challenges that range from rising data collection costs to diminishing public trust in government, and yes, those two are related, yet our staff possess the talent, the tenacity, and the creativity to address these challenges. And this brings me to today's moment. I will highlight some of the important areas of work at our Agency. My written statement covers these in great detail.

With regard to the 2030 Census, our goal is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place. Our strategy focuses on enhancing operations and technologies, on spurring further innovation through small-scale testing, and on expanding our systems and methods. Our upcoming 2026 test will assess our operational design. Design improvements from this test will then feed into our 2028 dress rehearsal, and the dress rehearsal then will represent a start-to-finish run of operations, and with that, we will be ready to launch in January 2030, as we always do, in remote Alaska.

More broadly, the Census Bureau is transforming and modernizing into a 21st Century Federal statistical agency. We are leveraging non-survey data sources and blending them with survey data to produce accurate, timely, and actionable data products. Recent efforts include a new statistical products first approach that starts with the purposes and uses of statistical data that people and businesses need. We are also spearheading a multiyear effort to modernize the current population survey in partnership with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This will ensure its long-term sustainability. We are launching an annual integrated economic survey which replaces seven independent economic surveys. It promotes efficiency and reduces respondent burden.

We are expanding access to data tools and apps, like My Community Explorer and Census Business Builder and Community Resilience Estimates, among others, and we are deepening our engagement with American-Indian and Alaska-Native communities and

tribal nations where Census Bureau statistics are critical to addressing the governance needs of the tribes. All the while, we are continuously seeking input from and engaging stakeholders and partners, including Congress. You see, providing the public with relevant data helps to motivate participation among people and businesses and our Censuses and surveys. After all, we cannot achieve our mission without public involvement.

In closing, I wish to thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Director. We will begin with the questions. The Chair recognizes Dr. Foxx from North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Director Santos, for being here today. As the Census Bureau notes on its website, our founders included the Decennial Census in the Constitution to “empower the people over their new government.” To achieve this, each person must be counted so that reapportionment can proceed and give each state the proper number of representatives in the House and the proper number of votes in the electoral college. It is concerning then that the 2020 Census Post-Enumeration Survey found that certain states had statistically significant overcounts and certain states had undercounts. Can you explain how these undercounts tended to harm red states and the overcounts tended to benefit blue states?

Director SANTOS. Thank you for that question, Congresswoman. I will start by saying that we are a nonpartisan Federal statistical agency, and we strive for perfection, although it can never be achieved. As I said earlier, we use the best methods, the best science, the best data, the best trained people and experts in order to carry out a Decennial Census.

Ms. FOXX. So, you are telling us that, but what assurances do we have that the Census Bureau did not try harder to “find” people to count in the states that saw overcounts? What proof do you have that that did not happen?

Director SANTOS. We have the proof of independent assessments by places like the National Academies, by the Government Accounting Office, and our own extensive data-gathering and quality analyses that demonstrate that we followed protocol in the midst of a pandemic. And so, we are confident that we did the best possible job, and we are very proud of the job that we did for 2020.

Ms. FOXX. But it is rather unusual that this Census in 2020 had such a deviation from past Censuses. Is that not correct?

Director SANTOS. Thank you for that question. Interestingly, it was almost unusual that in 2010 there was no statistical significantly different coverage estimates for all 50 states. Most Censuses have some states that end up being overcounted and some being undercounted. It is a byproduct of any manufacturing process. No manufacturing process is perfect.

Ms. FOXX. So, for the 2030 Census, have you identified ways to minimize any overcount and undercount? What are you going to do in the new Census?

Director SANTOS. Thank you very much for that question, Congresswoman. We take the role of counting everybody once, only once, and in the right place incredibly seriously. We not only conduct the Post-Enumeration study, which you have cited in the sta-

tistics on over-and undercounts of states, but we have several other assessments. We have a demographic analysis, we have administrative record checks and so forth, and what we are doing is we are identifying the populations that require additional attention. It turns out that, I would say, about 60 percent of the Nation's population is relatively easy to count because they self-participate. The balance tend to be individuals that represent historically undercounted people, and so we are focusing our attention to engage, to create better participation among those populations.

Ms. FOXX. Will you be using new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, in the 2030 Census, and how will those technologies be tested to make sure they provide accurate results and do not open new pathways for error?

Director SANTOS. Thank you for that question. That is a very important question. We see, and have been using, artificial intelligence and machine learning in many of our operations for years. We have quality checks that assure that egregious errors do not occur, and we typically use the AI and machine learning to create efficiency and effectiveness by leveraging administrative data, by reducing the efforts in coding and software, and creating better systems.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Raskin.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was intrigued by something the Chairman had to say in his opening remarks where he said that the loss of 89 people or 89 people short on the Census in New York led to the reduction of the U.S. Congressional delegation from New York by three seats.

Mr. COMER. I said one seat.

Mr. RASKIN. You may have misspoken because I looked it up, but in any event, it was one seat. New York lost a seat, and I found an article about that, August 12, 2021, *New York Times*, "New York Loses House Seat After Coming Up 89 People Short on Census." It is hard for me to see how if the Census Bureau was involved in some partisan plan to enhance representation in blue states, the difference of 89 people could not have been planted by a conspiracy theory, if there was one afoot, but there was not, but New York lost a seat. It seems like that example completely contradicts the thesis that there was some effort afoot to artificially inflate delegations in blue states.

In any event, if we talk about what really happened in 2020, and I understand you were not there. The Trump Administration was in control. You were not the Director at the time. Is that right?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. But the Census Bureau, even under the Trump Administration, was facing very difficult odds and difficult challenges in trying to make an accurate count, and I wonder if you would just explain what was the consequence of COVID-19 on the work of the Census Bureau?

Director SANTOS. Thank you for that question, Ranking Member Raskin. There was some uncanny, terrible timing to the tragic pandemic. On March 12, we announced the availability of online par-

ticipation, March 12, 2020. We announced that online participation in the Census was now possible.

Mr. RASKIN. Was that the first time that it ever happened?

Director SANTOS. It was the absolute first time. It was new technology that we were using and, in fact, I will go further to say that throughout the Census enumeration period, we never experienced 1 second of downtime with that online system.

Mr. RASKIN. But still, there were lots of people who did not go online, then you had to do it the traditional way.

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. RASKIN. Just quickly, if you would, what were the challenges posed by COVID-19?

Director SANTOS. OK. Thank you. Society shut down. We had to literally stop all field operations for several weeks and nimbly reconstitute our operational plan for the remaining time. We had to find a million masks and other protective devices for our staff, instruct them and train them on how to do that. In the meantime, people were consolidating households with elderly upstairs with COVID who were most possibly dying. And so, this notion that folks would simply stop and say, oh, it is time to do a Census and run and complete a form—

Mr. RASKIN. What about all the wildfires in the West and the hurricanes? Were those also an obstacle for your work?

Director SANTOS. Those exacerbated the impact of the pandemic. Louisiana experienced a horrible hurricane that wiped out housing units and communities. Wildfires were rampant. There were also floods and things of that sort, so those were challenges.

Mr. RASKIN. You know, I remember—I am certain other Members of the Committee remember—that the Administration tried to stop the count a month early and said it would cut it off when only 63 percent of the households had responded to the Census. What was the result of that confusion?

Director SANTOS. Well, you probably would have to ask the previous Director for the details on that. What I can say is that would have been absolutely tragic to the Decennial Census because we still had a lot of work to do, and we were able to do it in that remaining month.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. The Post-Enumeration Survey is a useful tool that produces estimates of these net undercounts and overcounts, but we know it is limited because it is a limited size sampling, as I said before. It is not a redo of the Census in any way. And I know some of our colleagues actually sued to stop the Census Bureau from using sampling in apportionment decisions back in 1998, and now today, the suggestion is that this far more limited survey, using a sampling method, is somehow more accurate than the Census itself. What is more accurate, this technical sampling technique afterwards or the actual block-by-block Census approach?

Director SANTOS. Well, that is an interesting question, Chairman [sic], so thank you for asking that. You know, we spent \$13.8 billion to do a complete enumeration, and we used the best science, the best methodologies, the best people, et cetera. That provides some credence as well as the independent expert reviews by National Academies and such on the value and the accuracy and the fitness for use of the Decennial Census. The Post-Enumeration Sur-

vey is designed not to estimate over-or undercounts, but to find where are the weaknesses and strengths in the methodologies that we use so that we can plan for a better subsequent Decennial Census.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Palmer from Alabama.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You made the point that the 2010 Census was fairly accurate. Here I am, Director Santos. I appreciate you being here, by the way. What I would like to know is, this is somewhat out of character for our Census. They are never perfect, but they are generally pretty reliable, except for the 2020 Census. So, what I would like to know is how much of the survey is based on actual direct contacts versus estimates?

Director SANTOS. I do not understand the question. Can you repeat it one more time so I can—

Mr. PALMER. OK, I am not going to allow you to filibuster me. This is a fairly—

Director SANTOS. No, I want to answer you.

Mr. PALMER. This is a very direct question. How much of the Census survey was based on direct contacts or estimates versus estimates? Was it 80 percent direct contacts? Was it 10 percent direct contacts? Do you know that?

Director SANTOS. We will have to take that as a question for the record, but allow me to simply say that direct contact, if somebody responds to an online, that is a direct contact, as opposed to—

Mr. PALMER. That counts. I am trying to determine how much of the Census in 2020 was based on estimates.

Director SANTOS. Oh, OK. You are talking about the 2020 Census?

Mr. PALMER. Yes, sir.

Director SANTOS. OK. Thank you. Thank you, Congressman. The estimates, and you may be referring to—

Mr. PALMER. No, you are filibustering. It is a simple question, and I am going to assume that a substantial part of it was based on estimate, OK? If it is based on estimates, then who does the estimate? Who is responsible for doing the estimates? Is it a group of individuals, one individual? How is that done?

Director SANTOS. Well, to answer your first—

Mr. PALMER. Now, give me a direct answer. I worked in engineering. I understand direct answers. I ask you a direct question, give me a direct answer. Is it one individual? Is it a group of individuals? Who does the estimates?

Director SANTOS. We will get back to you as a question of record.

Mr. PALMER. I am not asking for names. I am just asking.

Director SANTOS. I do not—

Mr. PALMER. OK.

Director SANTOS. You know, if I knew the exact number I would give it to you.

Mr. PALMER. Here is what I want to know. If it is based on estimates, when you do estimates, you have a basis for the estimate, documentation. Will you produce the documentation for the estimates?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. PALMER. OK. Mr. Chairman, he has agreed to do that. I would appreciate if you would do that before the end of the year. That would be very helpful.

And I assume that you maintain these files for full documentation of these estimates. If you are using estimates, and we have always used estimates, I mean, that has been a part of it. How is it that the estimate undercounts were predominantly in the red states with only one exception, because when you are using estimates, if you are making mistakes, it should be broadly dispersed without regard of the geographic location of the state. So how is it, if you were doing estimates, that it was disproportionately red states that were undercounted?

Director SANTOS. Thank you for the detailed question, Congressman. I am not familiar with the statistics.

Mr. PALMER. You are a statistician, though. I looked at your background.

Director SANTOS. Oh, absolutely.

Mr. PALMER. OK. Statistically, when you have that significant an anomaly, how do you explain that?

Director SANTOS. Well, there are 50 states.

Mr. PALMER. I know, and that is the point. There are 14 states where the counts were inaccurate. The ones that had the undercounts are disproportionately red states. That statistically is an anomaly. You should know that. This is why it is so important, and I am counting on accurate information on the basis for these estimates, that when you overcount New York by almost 700,000 people and you undercount other states, that is very problematic from a statistical perspective. So, how do you explain it?

Director SANTOS. Well, thank you—

Mr. PALMER. I know you are not thanking me for the question. You are filibustering. Give me an answer.

Director SANTOS. Random processes. If you take the 50 states and you randomly assigned 14—

Mr. PALMER. It is not a random process when you have a statistical anomaly like we see here.

Director SANTOS. All possibilities can occur in a random assignment of 14 to 50 states, including the one that was currently realized.

Mr. PALMER. Are you going to tell me that the people who were responsible for the estimates in the red states were incompetent? Their data was flawed? Mr. Chairman, I am not satisfied with the responses that I have gotten from the Director. I think we may need to follow up on this. I am very anxious to see what they provide us in terms of the verification validation basis for how they did these estimates because I think it is problematic just on a statistical perspective, and he knows that. I yield back.

Director SANTOS. Congressman, we would be more than happy to provide you and your staff and the Committee with a full briefing on these. We are confident that the methodology was solid and that there are no anomalies.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Palmer will submit questions, and we do that. We say that at the end of the hearing, we will submit questions and expect a response—

Director SANTOS. Mm-hmm.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. And that response will be published in our final Committee hearing report. So, we will make sure that we coordinate with that, Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Norton from Washington, DC.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director Santos, thank you for being here today. The Census plays a critical role for communities across the country. For example, in Fiscal Year 2021, more than \$2.8 trillion—that is trillion with a “T”—dollars across 353 Federal assistance programs were directed by Census data. Census data helps determine the Federal funding communities get for critical services, like hospitals, fire departments, and schools. Director Santos, in order to accurately understand the makeup and needs of our communities, do you agree that we need to ensure that as many people as possible respond to the Census Bureau’s surveys?

Director SANTOS. Yes, I agree with that.

Ms. NORTON. Director Santos, what effect can it have on communities when populations are undercounted?

Director SANTOS. That can lead to underfunding.

Ms. NORTON. The Republican bill to fund the Census for Fiscal Year 2025 would require certain migrants be excluded from apportionment decisions based on Census data. In 2019, the Trump Administration tried to do this by attempting to add a question to the 2020 Census asking about citizenship status. Research has shown that adding a citizenship question could have led to 9 million fewer people completing the 2020 Census, and Census staff reported that just a debate over adding such a question in 2019 made people fearful to engage with the Census. Notably, we already have methods for understanding citizenship trends because of other Census Bureau surveys. Mr. Santos, isn’t it true that the Census Bureau already asks about citizenship on the annual American Community Survey?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Ms. NORTON. Were you finished?

Director SANTOS. I said “correct.”

Ms. NORTON. The American Community Survey was created to make the Decennial Census simpler to complete. This facilitates higher participation and preserves privacy. And better Census data, in turn, enhances that communities receive funding and support that align with their needs. Asking about citizenship status on the Census would discourage people from participating and undermine the constitutently directed purpose of the Census. It would particularly impact minorities who are already undercounted in the Senate. I have introduced the Ensure Full Participation in the Census Act, H.R. 7911, to prohibit the Census Bureau from asking questions on the Decennial Census about citizenship, nationality, or immigration status. I urge my colleagues to join me in addressing this issue by co-sponsoring my bill, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Director. Just generically, is it correct to state that the purpose of the Census is to conduct a headcount, which is to be used to determine the apportionment of this body and of Presidential electors?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. BIGGS. And thus, inaccurate Census counts could lead to skewed proportional representation among states in this body and a misallocation of electoral college votes.

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. BIGGS. Has the Census Bureau—well, let me ask it this way. We have seen reports that statistically significant overcounts were identified New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Delaware, Minnesota, Utah, and Ohio. Conversely, statistically significant undercounts were identified in Texas, Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Illinois. And personally, even though this has never been reported, I always think Arizona got hosed on that as well. But anyway, is that accurate with regard to overcount and undercount?

Director SANTOS. I did not compare it to the list I had, but I am sure that you are correct.

Mr. BIGGS. Also, in 2010 and 2000, there was also undercounts and overcounts in those Censuses as well?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Chairman COMER. OK. Because it is so vital, Congress has given authority for there to be penalties for failure to answer the Decennial Census, and that is a \$5,000 fine. Is that fair?

Director SANTOS. I am not familiar with the amount of the fine, but it is correct.

Mr. BIGGS. Do you know the last time somebody actually had that fine imposed for failure to respond to the Decennial Census?

Director SANTOS. The Census Bureau is not an enforcement agency, and we—

Mr. BIGGS. I know. That is why I am just asking, do you know?

Director SANTOS. Yes. So, I was continuing with, we have never prosecuted anyone for not participating.

Mr. BIGGS. So, to your knowledge, no one has ever—

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. BIGGS. OK. You conduct other surveys, one of which is this document, American Community Survey, right?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. BIGGS. And it has a much more detailed set of questions, like whether the respondent's house, apartment, or mobile home has a sink with a faucet; the amount of money paid monthly for rent, electricity; highest level of educational attainment of respondents and their families; whether they have health insurance coverage; whether last week was this person temporarily absent from a job; what their wages are; amount of income from interest dividends or rental income; whether the respondent has difficulty concentrating because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition; whether the respondent has difficulty dressing or bathing; and the list goes on and on.

Director SANTOS. Mm-hmm.

Mr. BIGGS. In the American Community Survey, there are penalties for failure to respond to that as well.



Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. BIGGS. What are those penalties?

Director SANTOS. I am not familiar with those, but I expect that they would be similar to the Decennial because the American Community Survey is part of the Decennial Census but spread across time.

Mr. BIGGS. So, how many times has someone been prosecuted for failing to respond to a Census Bureau survey, including the Americans Community Survey?

Director SANTOS. To my knowledge, that has never occurred.

Mr. BIGGS. But you have it on the survey, and it scares the holy crap out of our constituents, saying that if you do not file this, and, look——

Director SANTOS. Mm-hmm.

Mr. BIGGS [continuing]. My deceased father-in-law was 85. He had someone coming back every 3 weeks telling him that they were going to put him in jail if he did not answer this thing. I mean, this is the absurdity. I am not blaming you per se because it is Congress' fault, because I think the whole fucking American Community Survey should not be going forward. You got the Decennial Census. There is a purpose to that Decennial Census, and as you said, it is the apportionment. That is what it is about. But when we start saying, hey, you know, who all lives here at your house, do you got running water, and those types of things. I can tell you what, my constituents, they say. We just want to be left alone. Why is the Federal Government continuing to go on? We are happy to answer every 10 years the Census and say we got six people here, four people, whatever it is. And I have a major problem with this, and I have a major problem with the fact that we hold it over people's heads saying if you do not answer this monstrosity here, you have criminal culpability, and that is a huge problem. And the reason I say that I am not angry with you, I am angry with us, is because we are the ones who can fix that, and we need to fix it, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlemen yields back, and that is the purpose of this hearing to make sure the same mistakes do not happen in 2030. The Chair recognizes Mr. Lynch from Massachusetts.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Director. You know, the backstory on this is if you live in a state where the elected officials are telling you it is run by the deep state, do not give information, be fearful of the government, that might be a partial explanation as to why people are not filling out the survey. I agree, it is onerous and it asks way too many questions, but, you know, we can work on that and make it better.

But I just want to push back on this. I hear people repeating this op-ed article about Massachusetts being overcounted. The mistakes on the last Census, Mr. Director, were bipartisan. It was a mess in Massachusetts. I know you had some excuses with COVID and all that, but I know my district. I know my district. We have about a half a million students in Massachusetts. I got 35 colleges just in my city of Boston, 35 colleges and universities. We did nothing on counting those kids. I know a lot of them were back and forth. Some of them, you know, took a gap year or whatever. We did

nothing on those. The disparity in my district between the affluent suburbs and some of the areas I represent, in urban areas, large minority populations, they are classified as hard to count. We did not do any door-to-door, totally undercounted. I had a 30-percent response rate in some of my urban areas where I grew up, and then I have a 70-percent response rate in some of my affluent suburbs. So, there are some real problems there with actually going out and counting people.

So, what are you doing about that, about the hard-to-count population there and also the student population? My Secretary of State, Bill Galvin, does an awesome job and was all over this. He is the liaison from Massachusetts to the Census, and we could not get people to come in and do that work during the last Census, and he was all over this, and it was a very frustrating experience. So, what are we doing about that?

Director SANTOS. Yes, we understand that there are historically undercounted populations in communities because of evidence, like low self-response rates, in particular communities. We believe that that is, in large part, due to distrust in government, and what we have done is launched a continuous engagement initiative where we are going out and putting a human face on the Census Bureau, providing the data to communities, and engage—

Mr. LYNCH. I appreciate that. Let me speak to that issue because in the past—I am not talking about the 2020 Census—but in the past we have had trusted figures help locally with the Census. So, we have had pastors, some of the Black churches get involved, some of the community leaders get involved, elected officials get involved. We explain. I grew up in the housing projects. I explain. I go door-to-door in my housing project. I explain to people that Federal funding depends on our response, and that means for veterans, for housing, for healthcare, for daycare. There are trillions of dollars in Federal money that depends on the count of the Census, and when you explain that to people and when that is explained to people by people that they trust, people will fill out that Census form.

Director SANTOS. Hear, hear.

Mr. LYNCH. Yes. So, what I am asking you is let us not let that happen again in the next Census. Let us get back—work with Secretary Galvin. He is one of the best. He is our liaison from Massachusetts. He is all over this. He knows the state, and I am just asking—let us get back to a granular level where people actually understand what the Census is for. Maybe we should work together on getting rid of some of the extraneous questions, you know, that people find off-putting and that anger them and cause them not to fill out the form. Maybe we get rid of some of those questions. I am for that.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentleman yield for—

Mr. LYNCH. I will yield.

Mr. RASKIN. Are you aware there are 353 different programs where assistance depends on people completing the Census?

Mr. LYNCH. Right.

Mr. RASKIN. More than 300.

Mr. LYNCH. Trillions of dollars. It is a great point to the Ranking Member. Yes, thank you. My time has expired, but I am willing to

work with you, Director Santos. We got to do a better job than we did last time. I yield back.

Director SANTOS. I agree. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Perry from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, sir, for being here. Sir, should people from other countries be counted for purposes of apportionment or voting in the United States?

Director SANTOS. What—

Mr. PERRY. People that live in other countries that are not citizens of the United States.

Director SANTOS. We count all residents of the United States.

Mr. PERRY. Residents of the United States, but my question is—I will be clear—should people that live in other countries that are not citizens of the United States be counted for apportionment or be approved to vote in elections in the United States?

Director SANTOS. Approved to vote for elections?

Mr. PERRY. Yes.

Director SANTOS. That is a policy decision.

Mr. PERRY. No, I am asking. I am asking. OK.

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. So, is it the policy right now, the United States, that people that reside in other countries, that are not citizens of the United States, can be counted for apportionment and vote in elections in the United States?

Director SANTOS. Yes to the first, and no to the second.

Mr. PERRY. People that live in other countries that are not citizens can be counted for apportionment. That is your answer?

Director SANTOS. If they are permanent residents of the U.S.

Mr. PERRY. No. People that are residents of other countries that are not citizens of the United States.

Director SANTOS. If you are a resident of another country, you should not be counted.

Mr. PERRY. Yes, I was going to say, I do not think this is a hard question—

Director SANTOS. No.

Mr. PERRY [continuing]. But maybe it is.

Director SANTOS. No.

Mr. PERRY. You should not be counted. Should you be able to vote?

Director SANTOS. Correct. You should not be able.

Mr. PERRY. You should not be able. So, I agree with you on those two conditions. So, that is a matter of geography, right? You are living somewhere else, you are not a citizen of the United States, so you should not be counted. You should not vote. That is a matter of geography. But if you are still a citizen of another country, but you just come to the United States, should you be counted for apportionment, and should you be allowed to vote? The only thing that is different in that scenario is you are no longer in the other country. That is the only thing different. Should you be counted for apportionment? Should you be allowed to vote?

Director SANTOS. Well, I just want to be clear that our job is to count all residents in the U.S. and provide the numbers to the President.

Mr. PERRY. All residents or all citizens?

Director SANTOS. All people who are residents of the U.S., all persons in the U.S.

Mr. PERRY. And what is that based on? What is that based on?

Director SANTOS. That is based on the 1790 Census Act that calls for the counting of all persons.

Mr. PERRY. And what about the Constitution? Is that based on the Constitution at all, Article 1, Section 2?

Director SANTOS. It is in the Constitution.

Mr. PERRY. And the Fourteenth Amendment?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. Does the Fourteenth Amendment not say "citizens, notwithstanding?"

Director SANTOS. I am not that familiar with that.

Mr. PERRY. I am sorry?

Director SANTOS. I am not that familiar with the language.

Mr. PERRY. Well, my goodness, you ought to be. You are the guy that is counting, and you ought to know who you are counting and why you are counting them.

Director SANTOS. Well, we absolutely know that we count all residents of the United States.

Mr. PERRY. All residents.

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. So, I can be someone who is from a foreign country, not a citizen. I just come over here, and I move here and I am accounted to make decisions on behalf of the citizens of the United States.

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. PERRY. So, let us just take another scenario. I come into your home. I am not a member of your family, I do not live there, but I come in and I take up residence in your garage, and I start helping you make decisions for your family. Would you see that as the correct way to do things or the incorrect way to do things?

Director SANTOS. I think that is a decision for the family. If you are talking about families working with each other. I have no comment.

Mr. PERRY. I am talking your family. I do not know you. This is the first time we have met. You do not know me, right? We have not met before. So, I just move in. I squat in your home and I start saying, look, I think you ought to park your car outside the garage because I am living in here now. Is that going to be acceptable to you?

Director SANTOS. It is actually irrelevant to why I am here today.

Mr. PERRY. No, what it is is ludicrous. It is not irrelevant because what you are saying is that is exactly what we are doing in the United States, and you agree with that, allowing people from foreign countries who do not have citizenship, who do not live here, who do not have any authority to be here, yet somehow are given the authority through your office to vote, make decisions, and be counted for apportionment of taxpayer dollars under your Census, under your counting. Do you consider yourself a statistical agency or a counting agency?

Director SANTOS. We are a Federal statistical agency.

Mr. PERRY. No, you are a counting agency. I took statistics. I took probability. Your job is not statistics. Your job is counting. The Census is to do the count, not come up with statistics about how many toilets are in my home. That is not your job. Your job is to count, sir, and you should count citizens of the United States for apportionment and voting rights. I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Connolly from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Mr. Santos, and I do agree with my friend from Pennsylvania. None of us are interested in how many toilets he has in his home. Mr. Santos, your directive comes from the Constitution of the United States. Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So, like the Postal Service, it is a mandated activity by the Constitution of the United States. Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And the language in the Constitution says, does it not, that the Census is to count every person in the United States. Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. It does not say "resident." It says "person."

Director SANTOS. The Census Act includes——

Mr. CONNOLLY. No, no, the Constitution——

Director SANTOS. OK.

Mr. CONNOLLY [continuing]. Does not say "resident." It says "person." Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. All persons, correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. It does not say "American citizen." Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Why do you think the founders in writing of the Constitution used that language? Why wouldn't they just say count every citizen?

Director SANTOS. I am not a historian, Congressman, so I would leave that to others to——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, you want to speculate with me? I mean, wouldn't we want to know who is living in the United States, who is here, whether they are citizens or not? Might that not be an important piece of information?

Director SANTOS. Our job is to do a complete enumeration, and we do that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. But that is the mandate you have got, right?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right. So, I was listening to the Chairman, and he seemed to be suggesting we only ought to count American citizens. If I read the Constitution correctly, and I know my friend, the Ranking Member, is a constitutional scholar, if you want to change that, you got to change the Constitution. You have got to amend the Constitution. There have also been hints and innuendos, Mr. Santos, at some kind of conspiracy up there in whatever top management floor you occupy, a cabal that set about to deliberately skew the numbers, that we are going to overcount population in blue states and, coincidentally, undercount population in red

states, thus favoring blue states for the electoral college and the apportionment here in the U.S. Congress. I want to give you an opportunity to confirm or deny that you headed a cabal in the Census Bureau to ensure that there was a favorable disposition toward blue states and an unfavorable disposition with respect to enumeration and counting of persons in red states.

Director SANTOS. I wholly reject that claim.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You reject it.

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You did not do that?

Director SANTOS. We did not do that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Did you have subalterns who did it?

Director SANTOS. No.

Mr. CONNOLLY. In doing the count, do you train Census enumerators to wink and blink and have a bias toward a particular political persuasion when they are doing the count?

Director SANTOS. Absolutely not.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And let me ask about other factors that might affect the count. Let us take money. In the 10 years prior to the 2020 Census, were there budget cuts to the Census Bureau's budget?

Director SANTOS. My recollection is that there were.

Mr. CONNOLLY. There were. Could those budget counts conceivably have an impact on your ability to do the enumeration you are required to do by the Constitution, and could that, in fact, even affect the accuracy of that enumeration?

Director SANTOS. Yes. In fact, the budget cuts, they led to a cut-back in the extent to which we could test the operation leading up to the 2020 Census, and that, in turn, raised the risk that things could go wrong.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And in March 2020, was there some kind of nationwide, in fact global, health tragedy that cost 1.2 million American lives and might have affected the ability to recruit Census enumerators, let alone knock on doors and try to get information for those who did not go online in answering the Census?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. What was that health crisis?

Director SANTOS. What was that? Come again? What was what?

Mr. CONNOLLY. It was COVID-19?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And was that the first such pandemic in the United States and the world in over a hundred years?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So, combination of the budget and your ability to recruit and do your work based on the worst pandemic in a hundred years, might have conceivably affected both accuracy and your ability to do the count, though you, in fact, completed the Census. Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct, and we are proud of the job we did.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you so much. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Jordan from Ohio.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director, did it take a constitutional amendment for the Census Bureau to be able to ask Americans whether you rent your home or own your home?

Director SANTOS. No.

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Connolly said you cannot ask if they are a citizen unless we change the Constitution. I understand the Constitution says you have got to count persons and that is what you do, but you ask a lot of other things. You find out a lot of other information: do rent your home, do own your home. You ask if they are deaf or if they are blind in this American Community Survey that comes from the Census Bureau. You ask if they got any mental illness. So, you can do that, but you cannot ask sort of the fundamental question that applies to how we apportion seats for the U.S. Congress, whether you are a citizen or not? You cannot do that?

Director SANTOS. We can do whatever we need to do——

Mr. JORDAN. Exactly.

Mr. SANTOS [continuing]. Yes, according to whatever the——

Mr. JORDAN. We just need to tell you to do that, but Democrats do not want to do that, do they? We want you to find out how many citizen, how many persons are in the country because that is what the Constitution says. We passed legislation on this Committee—we want you to also ask the question how many citizens are there in the country. Are you opposed to doing that?

Director SANTOS. I am opposed to not providing Congress with the information that it needs.

Mr. JORDAN. I understand that. I am asking do you think it is a good idea for Congress or the policy-makers to put on the survey, on the Census, asking that question, are you a citizen or not?

Director SANTOS. We will do whatever the mandates are.

Mr. JORDAN. I am asking your opinion. You are the guy who does it. What do you think you think? Do you think that would be good for us to do?

Director SANTOS. I think that we would need to take a very careful look because there is evidence that adding a citizenship question to the Decennial Census would dampen participation.

Mr. JORDAN. Is there any evidence when you ask an American citizen, if we ask you if you got a mental illness, that that might discourage participation? Did you get any evidence on that?

Director SANTOS. That is part of the American Community Survey, and we ask it, and we get great participation on that.

Mr. JORDAN. So, you can ask people whether they have got a mental problem, but you cannot ask whether they are a citizen or not. The mental problem, that is going to be fine? They are going to participate?

Director SANTOS. In fact, we ask citizenship in the American Community Survey.

Mr. JORDAN. Oh, then why don't you do it in the main one then?

Director SANTOS. Well, I think we have a responsibility making sure we understand the risks and benefits of adding any question to the Decennial Census. In this case, in the case of the citizenship question, there would be a risk of exacerbating undercounts due to dampened self-response, while at the same time, richer data, more valuable data exists with the American Community Survey. When you combine citizenship question with all these other socioeconomic variables, where the geography, you can get estimates down to a relatively small geographic area.

Mr. JORDAN. Do you think by not asking that, that in any way impacts how the congressional seats are, in fact, apportioned around the country? Do you think there is an impact by not knowing specifically the citizens in respective areas? Do you think there is an impact there?

Director SANTOS. I think I missed the point of the question, please.

Mr. JORDAN. Do you think by not having that information, that districts can be apportioned to the respective states in a way that does not reflect actual citizenship in those states?

Director SANTOS. Actually, I do not have an opinion other than to say we are obliged to count everyone, provide the counts to the President—

Mr. JORDAN. Yes.

Mr. SANTOS [continuing]. Who gives it to Congress, and it is a policy decision then—

Mr. JORDAN. OK.

Mr. SANTOS [continuing]. For Congress to decide how to redistrict, how to use those numbers.

Mr. JORDAN. My guess is you go talk to most people on the street, go talk to people who live in the 4th District of Ohio and say, do you think we should ask on the Census if you are a citizen of this country, I think most people would say, well, yes, aren't we doing that already? And the fact that we are not, they think, well, that is just the dumbest thing in the world. So, I think that is just sort of common sense, and yet we have this big push against doing it, which surprises me because we can do both. It is not an either/or, as Mr. Connolly tried to frame it. We can do exactly do what the Constitution says, find out how many people are in the country, but I do not know why we cannot find out how many of those people are actually citizens of this great country. I just do not get that.

And again, I think you talk to any American anywhere, and they are going to be like, yes, aren't we doing that already? And you guys are like, no, we do not think we should do that, even though we can ask what you drive to work, how much you work, are you getting welfare, do you work for the government, don't you work for the government, do you got a mental illness, are you deaf, are you blind, what is your race, what is your sex. You can ask all those questions, but the one question that might—let us just say might—have an impact on how we apportion congressional seats, we cannot ask that one. Oh, that seems stupid. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. At the request of the witness, we will take a short 5-minute bathroom break.

Pursuant to the previous order, the Committee stands in recess for just 5 minutes.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will come back to order. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Frost from Florida for 5 minutes.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chair. First off, I want to say, like many hearings we have on this Committee, it was started with a lot of falsehoods. We heard, and I do not know if you misspoke, Mr. Chair, you had brought up that states like Florida and Texas did not gain seats when they did gain seats. My state gained a congressional seat. I think these facts are really im-



portant as people are asserting that there is some sort of grand conspiracy here with the Census Bureau. The other thing I want to do is thank you for coming to Central Florida. You met with my staff and community leaders in Orlando and really appreciate you doing that.

My Republican colleagues have called this hearing out of a concern about errors resulting in some overcounting in the 2020 Census. However, Florida had one of the most harmful undercounts in the country when we talk about Black and Brown folks specifically. Director Santos, Florida had a roughly 3.5 percent undercount. Can you put that into terms of how many households were impacted?

Director SANTOS. One more time?

Mr. FROST. We had a 3.5 percent undercount.

Director SANTOS. Mm-hmm.

Mr. FROST. Can you put that in terms of how many households were undercounted?

Director SANTOS. I actually cannot without some mechanical help. Sorry.

Mr. FROST. There is something that was going on in 2020 that might have made the counting uniquely challenging. What was that?

Director SANTOS. There were actually some, I believe, natural disasters?

Mr. FROST. Yes, natural disasters, and there was another big thing going on.

Director SANTOS. The pandemic.

Mr. FROST. The global pandemic, COVID-19. I know, I want to forget about it. COVID-19 was going on, but not just that, but Florida, in part because of the climate crisis, has had increasing extreme weather events across the entire state, hurricanes included. So, we have hurricanes, wildfires, a public health crisis, and political interference in what was going on as well. And by political interference, I am talking about situations where special interest groups are pressuring officials to change questions on the Census or end outreach prematurely. For Black and Brown communities, being underrepresented in the Census, especially in Florida, it is nothing new. It has been going on for a long time. In fact, the House version of the budget for the Census blocks the Census Bureau from reaching out to anyone more than twice, which is funny because some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who would agree with blocking you all from reaching out to people more than twice, I bet some of their constituents would like that limit when they are campaigning as well.

Director Santos, if Black and Brown communities are regularly uncouncted, this means that resources are directed away from these communities. We know this worsens the problems of affordable housing, transportation. What other problems does it expand or create?

Director SANTOS. What other problems?

Mr. FROST. Yes.

Director SANTOS. Does what—

Mr. FROST. Undercounting of—

Director SANTOS. Oh, undercounting, yes. Not only are there impacts with regard to Federal funds allocations, but we do not get

as accurate a picture of the communities as we should, and that can impact everything from economic development, a manufacturer coming in to see if they have a sufficient labor base—well, if there are undercounts, there may not be sufficient adults or whatever—to community needs assessments, to infrastructure assessments, whether to put in new roads, new bridges, things of that sort.

Mr. FROST. Yes.

Director SANTOS. So, there are expansive—business communities also, whether to put in retail shops.

Mr. FROST. It really impacts everything.

Director SANTOS. It impacts all of society.

Mr. FROST. I think that is right. And this harm, which goes back far longer than a decade, is being made worse, especially in my state, by our Governor, Ron DeSantis, who went out of his way to veto the Republican-made political maps in Florida and demanded that his racist version of the map, which Florida Appeals Court confirmed was racist, be accepted. So, I just think it is interesting to me that some of my colleagues want to assert that you are part of some grand conspiracy to undercount Republicans when my Republican-run state of Florida received an extra congressional seat. Why? Because of the fastest-growing demographic in the state of Florida, people of color, then use that opportunity of the new seat to actually gerrymander it and get rid of two Black access seats in the state of Florida. We have got to do a lot better, especially as it relates to these counting errors.

Just really quick with the last bit of my time, as I see the 2030 Census needs to have contingency plans for major disasters, political interference, and reaching undercounted communities, can you talk a little bit about efforts you have been making to focus on those things, especially natural disasters?

Director SANTOS. Yes, certainly. We are absolutely leveraging as many of our administrative records from different data sources to help out, clarify, and improve the counts, not only in disaster zones, but in other areas, and so we are doing that type of work. Also, in our upcoming 2026 test, we will be visiting areas that were subject to some severe natural disaster areas, like parts of North Carolina.

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Grothman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes. First of all, we are going to give you a quick quiz because I used to collect stamps as a child. I know here we have, what is this person's ancestry? You put down Cape Verde. I forget, where is Cape Verde?

Director SANTOS. I wish I knew. I do not. I am sorry.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. OK. We got to look that up afterwards because I—

Director SANTOS. Yes, question for the record.

Mr. GROTHMAN. It is a strange country to pick out of the blue and list as one of the alternatives. We have covered on here already, you do not ask whether somebody is a citizen or not, correct?

Director SANTOS. If you are speaking of the Decennial Census, that is correct.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Any census?

Director SANTOS. We have three censuses. We have economic, government, and population.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. When you do not use it, why don't you use it? It seems to me that is the first question I would ask. Because if you are not here as a citizen, much more likely to be transient, much more likely to return home, that sort of thing, something I would like to know, and if we have a difference on some of these questions, you know, education or bedrooms or whatever, I would kind of like to know how different our immigrants are living compared to the native born and how different people who are not here legally are. Why, with all these obscure questions on here that I do not know what we are going to get out of, why do you leave that off again?

Director SANTOS. We do not leave the citizenship question off of the American Community Survey, which has education and housing, many variables, socioeconomic—

Mr. GROTHMAN. The general Census, every 10 years, you leave it off, right?

Director SANTOS. There are 10 questions for 10 minutes. We try to keep the respondent burden down to increase the level of participation.

Mr. GROTHMAN. That is why we do not ask people because we are afraid a question, are you a citizen or are you not, is going to burden people and they are going to—

Director SANTOS. We are looking to ask whatever the Secretary of Commerce says should be on the questionnaire for the Decennial Census—

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK.

Mr. SANTOS [continuing]. And historically, we have used the 10 questions for quite a while.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Now my colleague, clearly, I do not like to define people by where they are from, much less their race, but nevertheless, on here we do have a question listing where your background is from, what country? That is where we picked up on this Cape Verde stuff. Could you elaborate on that a little bit, a person's ancestry or ethnic origin? I would think over time, most people have a little bit of several—a little bit of Polish, a little bit of German, a little bit of Italian, maybe a little bit of African. What are we trying to get out of this, and given that, I would think, most Americans by now are a little bit of a variety of countries, how they are supposed to respond to that survey?

Director SANTOS. Thank you. What we are seeing is that as society evolves with technology, and we have DNA testing and genealogical websites, and things of that sort, people are becoming, in society, very interested in who they are and where they are from. And we are allowing, through a race/ethnicity question, people to tell their stories.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Well, what does that mean? Say, I have not taken one of these tests, but I know a lot of people who have.

Director SANTOS. Mm-hmm.

Mr. GROTHMAN. You know, it is not unusual to come up with five or six different things on the thing, right? I am a little bit of African, I am a little bit German, I am a little bit English. What are we getting at there?

Director SANTOS. Information is power and allows us to serve communities better.

Mr. GROTHMAN. How would it affect any decision that government makes at all?

Director SANTOS. Oh, so for example, in South Texas, I am familiar with the Rockport area. We have a vibrant Vietnamese community. Rather than simply saying there are Asians there and having—

Mr. GROTHMAN. I guess what I am pointing out is—

Mr. SANTOS [continuing]. And not knowing what type of questionnaires to put out, we would have—

Mr. GROTHMAN [continuing]. I think over time, as we have more intermarriage—I am trying to think—I think all we are going to get out of here is trouble, but people do get these ancestry things and they do take them out. I am just afraid there are people in this society who are up to no good, who are trying to have people permanently defined by their ancestry. And then we have this rather odd question with rather obscure countries on here—Cape Verde, geez—asking on here, and I do not know why we are asking or how it would change public policy at all other than for people who are fanatics about forever viewing people by where their great, great grandparents came from. Like I said, what difference does it make if I am one-eighth Polish? How is that ever going to come into play on anything?

Director SANTOS. Is that a question?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes.

Director SANTOS. Allowing a culture, and a culture of Polish and other cultures that are gathered, can impact how do can impact—

Mr. GROTHMAN. How do Hispanic or any—

Director SANTOS. It can impact how we approach people.

Mr. GROTHMAN. It might be even the culture. Even that is a little bit discriminatory. I can imagine if I was born in Poland, I might carry some of the Polish culture. I would think the vast majority of people today say in Wisconsin, a lot of Polish people probably immigrated here six generations ago. I do not think it has anything to do with anything. But nevertheless, it seems like we are trying to create this idea in which forever—like my colleague over here—forever identify by an ethnic group, which is kind of a dangerous thing. And people who want to, I think, destroy the country like this idea of forever people around hanging with this ethnic group, even though until they took an ancestry test, they might not even know they had any of this ethnic group in them. So, it is just an odd question and potentially dangerous question.

So, I am going to ask you one more time, what difference does it make whether I am Norwegian or Polish? What possible difference—or Mexican—I might not even know I was part Mexican—what difference does it make? What are we getting at?

Director SANTOS. It allows us to serve society better.

Mr. GROTHMAN. How?

Director SANTOS. Because it allows us to tailor programs, to tailor schooling, education, et cetera.

Mr. GROTHMAN. If I am one-eighth Mexican, how does it affect anything the government does or should do?

Director SANTOS. We use that information in order to help determine how many different languages and the types of approaches we make to the doorstep?

Mr. GROTHMAN. No, I am one-eighth Mexican. I have never spoken a word of Spanish in my life. How—

Director SANTOS. We do not necessarily use the one-eighth Mexican, and we do not gather that granularity of information. We collect multiple races and ethnicities and use that information to tailor and fine tune outreach for our censuses and surveys. But then communities can use that to better address their specific communities' concerns.

Mr. GROTHMAN. You are going down a dangerous path in which forever you want people identified where their ancestry comes from, even though it has nothing whatsoever to do with their life today, right? You know, if I am one-eighth Norwegian and I never met my Norwegian great grandma and I never knew a word Norwegian, it has nothing to do with anything, but you are trying to make it part of something. Thank you very much, my Chair.

Chairman COMER. Yes, sir.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you for indulging me.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Lee from Pennsylvania.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. When it comes to the Census, many people think it is just a boring form that we do every 10 years. As I was listening to some of my colleagues speaking out, I think it is more important than ever that we talk about the actual importance of the Census. I think particularly about the fact that, you know, we had people talking about what is the importance of race in the country that relegated people to one drop. One drop of Black ancestry determined whether or not they had different outcomes by the government, by government mandate, by government policies, and those things are not necessarily a race simply because of the Civil Rights Act, for instance, but neither here nor there.

Fun fact, I was actually a Census enumerator in one of my lives, so I have actually lived on the other side of the Census count, and I can actually, and will later on in this question line, speak to specifically how difficult a job it is to actually extract this type of information that is crucial and critical. We are talking about information that is used to determine where and how, when we build roads or bridges, funding for schools that we see really need to be opened and libraries, or deciding where to put fire departments, or hospitals. The Census data is the starting point for so much. Director Santos, is it true that the Federal Highway Administration, for instance, uses Census data to decide which road and bridge improvements get prioritized?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Ms. LEE. What about low-income housing projects? Is it true that HUD uses Census data to figure out where a project is going to be built?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. LEE. Is it true that Census data is used to make sure that the Voting Rights Act is enforced?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. LEE. Is it used to decide which areas get Title 1 grants for their schools?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Ms. LEE. Or Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, Pell Grants, the National School Lunch Program—all uses Census data, correct?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. LEE. It is staggering, isn't it? A single form filled out by millions shape 353 programs to provide \$2.8 trillion in Federal funding for communities across America, and that was in 2021 alone. I would actually like to thank my Republican colleagues for bringing up undercounts because here is the ugly truth. In 2022, the *New York Times* reported that the 2020 Census undercounted the number of Hispanic, Black, and Native-American residents, even though the overall population counts were largely accurate. These are the same groups that have been historically undercounted. These are people, families, communities, the very folks most dependent on the funding Census data helps allocate, and many of those funding programs are looking at more than general population numbers. They are looking at demographics, income levels, age and education levels, data that cannot be figured out with just estimates. The George Washington Institute of Public Policy estimates the value of each completed Census form at more than \$4,000 a person. That is the value of a single Census form. Multiply that by thousands or millions, and we are talking about a catastrophic loss for the people who have already had the deck stacked against them. Unfortunately, there are no do-overs for the Census, and it is something that we just cannot procrastinate on improving as we prepare for the 2030 Census.

So, back in 2010, when I was a Census enumerator counting in my own community, obviously overwhelmingly Black, I can say firsthand that we did not have the right tools to do the job. And you spoke to how difficult it can be when the questionnaire is too long, to get people to open up to share basic information about themselves, and when they admittedly have fears, concerns, and apprehension about the motive of people who work in government. And after listening to this testimony today, we probably should not be surprised if more people are more fearful of providing that sort of information. The 2020 Census had a tough time also between the pandemic, Trump stopping the count early, major hurricanes and wildfires, as we heard from our colleague from Florida. And looking forward, we need to make sure that the work is being done now to make sure that the 2030 Census is as accurate as possible. We all agree with that.

Director Santos, can you tell us more about some of the ways you are working to improve Census data collection to make sure that the count is as accurate as possible across the country?

Director SANTOS. Yes, I can. We are expanding our use of online participation with the addition of the broadband programs that extend access to the internet. We are going in and testing out culturally relevant messaging and contacts throughout our test sites to make sure that the messaging we provide resonates with the participants. But at the same time, because there is a mistrust in government, we are leveraging and building a network of local community groups across the Nation who can work hand-in-hand with

us so that they can be the trusted messengers, and we can use multiple angles in order to bolster the messaging and have individuals more engendered to participate.

Mr. COMER. Thank you so much for that. As somebody, again, who did the Census in my own community, I truly believe that some of those fixes will be helpful, they will be meaningful, and I look forward to a 2030 Census where communities like mine in the Mon Valley, and those areas of Pittsburgh, for instance, are not undercounted. I thank you so much, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Mace from South Carolina.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Santos, for being here with us today.

The U.S. Census Bureau carries out the important constitutional duty of conducting the Decennial Census as required in Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, as you very well know. The Census has far-ranging consequences, determining the apportionment of congressional seats, electoral college votes states receive, and the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars in Federal funding to states and localities. The Census Bureau's Post-Enumeration Survey for the 2020 Census identified serious over-and undercounting issues which the Bureau has acknowledged are worse than previous censuses. Even more troubling, the Census Bureau's report acknowledges a statistically significant overcount in liberal northeast states and a statistically significant undercount in conservative southern states. The 1790 Census Act, which the left likes to use as an excuse to count illegals and residents and whatever the heck you want to call people in this country who are not citizens, that women were counted but they could not vote. No, they could not vote, but women were citizens of the United States. So, the left, that is their reasoning for counting illegals in the Census and that sort of thing.

So, I have a series of questions for you, Mr. Santos, that are "yes" or "no," and so I would ask that you use "yes" or "no" when I ask these questions. Did the U.S. Census Bureau do anything to identify the immigration or citizenship status of individuals surveyed during the 2020 Census? Yes or no.

Director SANTOS. No.

Ms. MACE. Are illegals counted in the Census? Yes or no.

Director SANTOS. Yes, if they are permanent residents, if they reside in the U.S.

Ms. MACE. OK. So, when you are doing the Census with folks and asking the question, you are not asking if they are a citizen. Do you ask if they are a permanent resident?

Director SANTOS. We ask folks to list everyone who lives at that residence.

Ms. MACE. OK. But you are saying you are only counting illegals if they are a permanent resident?

Director SANTOS. Well, if they live at that residence. It is the interpretation of the instructions for the person.

Ms. MACE. So, your definition of "permanent residents" is that they live at a place in the U.S., at a U.S. address.

Director SANTOS. Yes. I believe I misspoke because there is a legal definition to permanent——

Ms. MACE. Oh, you definitely misspoke.

Director SANTOS. Yes, to permanent resident.

Ms. MACE. OK.

Director SANTOS. It is someone who usually lives at that address.

Ms. MACE. So, I am going to ask the question again. Are criminal illegal aliens, the people that break the law coming into our country when they enter in the door illegally, are they counted in the U.S. Census? Yes or no?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Ms. MACE. Thank you. All right. Are there political implications for congressional apportionment and the electoral college when we are counting non-citizens, when we are counting criminal illegal aliens in the Census? Yes or no?

Director SANTOS. I am sorry. I missed the first part of the question.

Ms. MACE. Are there political implications for congressional apportionment and the electoral college when you are counting criminal illegal aliens in the U.S. Census?

Director SANTOS. I do not know.

Ms. MACE. Oh, you absolutely know because apportionment is based on what? Is it based on, what, population?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Ms. MACE. Population based on counts in the what, U.S. Census?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. MACE. Right. You are the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, correct?

Director SANTOS. Mm-hmm. Correct.

Ms. MACE. Why is this so difficult for you to answer honestly?

Director SANTOS. Well, no, it is what it is.

Ms. MACE. What is what it is?

Director SANTOS. So, if there is more population, then you get—

Ms. MACE. What is what it is? You just said you did not know if there are political implications for congressional apportionment in the electoral college when you are counting illegals.

Director SANTOS. Well, in all honesty, I am not a politician. I am a scientist, and so we do our counts according to the Constitution.

Ms. MACE. OK. Mr. Science. Mr. Science.

Director SANTOS. Sure. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MACE. When you are doing apportionment, when you are doing congressional seats based on population that includes illegal aliens, does that have a political impact in campaigns when you are drawing those lines and having people vote in those elections?

Director SANTOS. They are counted in apportionment, yes.

Ms. MACE. OK. You are not being honest this morning, and I think it is a slap in the face to the American people. If apportionment of congressional seats is based on the Census and roughly 750,000 people per congressional seat in this country, would that unfairly impact how congressional seats are drawn? Yes or no?

Director SANTOS. I am sorry. You are speaking too fast for me. Can you slow down a little bit?

Ms. MACE. No, I cannot. The answer is yes. In California, in Valadao's district, where 750,000 people live in that district, 167,000 people voted in that election. I would imagine, and No. 1,



Gavin Newsom is probably still counting because the guy cannot do math, 3 weeks, 4 weeks into post-election, but 167,000 people out of 750,000 population. In my district, 390,000 people voted. We do not have the number of illegals that California has statistically, scientifically, Mr. Science. That is just the math. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Crockett from Texas.

Ms. CROCKETT. It is interesting that we are having this hearing, and I know one thing that I have learned so far is that, while freshman orientation just ended, we need a course on what the Census is for because we have people sitting in Congress and have no idea what the Census is for. And so, I do appreciate that you have talked about what the funding is for, but it seems like my colleagues really want to zero in on southern states, so let us talk about Texas for a second, and let us deal with them and their concerns about their districts, and let us also talk about the citizen situation.

So, I do not know how much you have paid attention to the election, but we do have an incoming administration, and we have a border czar who has said that they are going to deport everyone that is here and is not a citizen. They are planning to do mass deportations. In fact, in the state of Texas, our commissioner has offered up land so that they can put these camps there and send people out of our country. Now, if you start asking people, are you a citizen or not and they are living in a home, and somebody is threatening to go in and raid homes and take everybody out and send them back to wherever they came from, I mean, I would imagine that that may make people say, never mind, I am not going to fill this out, but, I mean, has that been your finding or no?

Director SANTOS. We have conducted research that shows that there can be selective inclusion of individuals who reside in a residence because of—

Ms. CROCKETT. Exactly, because you have got the Federal Government that is asking this question, and it is the same Federal Government that is threatening to go and yank people out of their schools, their homes, and things like that. And then we just had a conversation where we were talking about how many voters. Listen, when you are counting people, you are not just counting voters. You count children, don't you?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. You count a lot of people that are not necessarily voters, and I want to make sure that we really get to the nitty gritty on Texas because this is hilarious to me. Texas added two seats. In 2020, according to the Census, and we know that there was a significant undercount specifically in Texas, for a combination of reasons, but we know that, specifically, Texas added 4 million people. Of those 4 million people, do you want to take a guess at how many were Anglos? Just a guess.

Director SANTOS. I would say a majority.

Ms. CROCKETT. A hundred and eighty thousand, that is it, of 4 million, 95 percent of the people that were added. And we know that when it comes to minority populations, they tend to be undercounted. So, get this. We added 4 million people. They were people

of color. Texas got two new seats, so they took those Black and Brown and Asian bodies, and guess what? Do you think that we got a new Black, Brown, or Asian seat? Somehow the way that they do their Republican math in the state of Texas, that amounted to two new white seats. Guess what? White Republican seats. We got two new Republican seats out of 4 million people of color. So, let me tell you, they love to use our bodies to apportion us in an inaccurate way, all right?

So, when we talk about our districts, I also want to talk about something that Texas has taken advantage of that I have worked on a lot, in fact, I did legislation on. It is called prison gerrymandering. I do not know if you are familiar with it.

Director SANTOS. I am familiar.

Ms. CROCKETT. But here is the reality. The numbers show that in rural Texas, they were constantly bleeding population. Urban Texas was growing exponentially. But what they do is they count inmates where they are imprisoned instead of counting them where it is that they will return to. So, their family members that are in Dallas, Texas or Houston or wherever, their family members, when they need something, they call us, even if it is relating to that inmate. But somehow rural Texas is getting better roads than they probably deserve because they are counting those inmates that are not driving on those roads, they are counting those inmates that are not using their hospitals, they are counting those inmates whose children are not attending their schools because of prison gerrymandering. So, again, Republicans are really good about using Black and Brown bodies. But, I can also tell you that the numbers are clear that we have a Black and Brown incarceration issue, not just in Texas, but in this country. And in fact, the state of Texas incarcerates more people than any other independent democratic country. That is how bad our incarceration is just in the state of Texas, and I have got so many great colleagues on this Committee that actually benefit from being able to do things like that.

So, listen, this is about resources. It is about putting the resources where the people are. And I am curious to know, for whoever goes next, do you ask your constituents when they call your office, are you a citizen or not? Because at the end of the day, I have to handle immigration cases as well in my office. We are elected to represent the people regardless of their citizenship, and we have to help them because they reside in our districts. Thank you, and I will yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes—before I recognize Mr. Burchett, do you seek recognition, Mr. Grothman?

Mr. GROTHMAN. I know that people back home have been waiting, so I will tell them, when they decide to pick Cape Verde, Cape Verde is a little island country off the West African coast—

Chairman COMER. Got it.

Mr. GROTHMAN [continuing]. Who they felt they should include in the Census, so.

Chairman COMER. All right.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I know people back home are waiting to find out.

Chairman COMER. Very good. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Mr. Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Santos, are illegal immigrants counted in the U.S. Census?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. Why?

Director SANTOS. They have a usual residence in the United States.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Is that data collected by the Census used to decide how many congressional districts and electoral college votes a state gets?

Director SANTOS. It is.

Mr. BURCHETT. And it is true that states with high numbers of illegal immigrants, like California or New York, are typically Democrat states.

Director SANTOS. Correct, as is Texas.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, sir. By counting illegal immigrants, these states receive more electoral votes and seats in Congress. Doesn't that mean that Democrats benefit from illegal immigration? You are a scientist.

Director SANTOS. I am a scientist. That is the way the math works out.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, sir. OK. Do you believe illegal immigrants should be counted in the Census?

Director SANTOS. I believe we should count according to the Constitution, yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. Do you think generational Americans are negatively impacted by counting illegal immigrants in the Census?

Director SANTOS. I have no comment on that.

Mr. BURCHETT. Can you explain which states had overcounts and which states had counts in the 2020 Decennial Census?

Director SANTOS. Certainly. Would you like me to read the list?

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes.

Director SANTOS. Thank you. In terms of—let us see—undercounts, there was Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Florida, Illinois, Texas; overcounts were Ohio, Massachusetts, Utah, New York, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Hawaii, according to the Post-Enumeration Survey.

Mr. BURCHETT. Why do you believe that was the case?

Director SANTOS. The Post-Enumeration Survey does not tell us why. It tells us how much.

Mr. BURCHETT. What is the Census Bureau doing to mitigate errors and reduce the risk of miscounts in the 2030 Census?

Director SANTOS. We are rethinking how we go about going after historically undercounted populations and making sure that to make sure that everybody gets counted once, only once, and in the right place, and we have both technological and sort of sociological, in terms of contact, and other types of approaches. In the field, we are optimizing field work to make sure that if we knock on doors for folks who have not participated, they can have a chance to participate and so forth. We are also using administrative records from a variety of sources both at the Federal level and state level, when we can get ahold of those, to find the gaps in case maybe a household did not completely enumerate everyone. If we have several different sources of administrative records that indicate that there might be a missing person, then we can go back and correct that.

Mr. BURCHETT. Do you feel like this is the best way to correct those errors, or is there something else that you would rather see done?

Director SANTOS. What we would rather see done is everybody participate, that the self-response rates are a hundred percent, and we are doing everything that we can to engender and to improve the propensity for somebody to respond.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Explain. What is your definition of "engender?"

Mr. BURCHETT. To get folks to want to do something.

Mr. BURCHETT. Motivated?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields. The Chair recognizes Mr. Casar.

Mr. CASAR. Thank you, Chairman, and to the point that my distinguished colleague from Tennessee just made, the most immigrant states by far in the country with most immigrants, documented and undocumented, are California and Texas. Virtually no other state comes close, California being, of course, under unified Democratic control, Texas statewide under unified Republican control. The next state that comes somewhat close, but not really, is Florida, of course, also under unified Republican control. The question of whether to count immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, was decided by the U.S. Congress back right after the Civil War. So, this was decided. It was debated in these same halls, and that Congress and the states decided to end the three-fifths compromise, which is when enslaved people were counted as three-fifths of a person when we did counting of people. Now that seems like the worst way to do it. And so, they said let us count every person as one person, and the Congress decided to do that.

Not just with all due respect, just to my colleague who spoke before me, but to everyone in the Congress, I still do not get why we would rehash and rehab that debate after the Civil War. I think after that amount of bloodshed, that amount of terror and horror, we would look back at the congressional record and say, yes, it probably makes sense that we say we are going to stop counting half people and three-fifths people and say we are going to count the number of people in the country. Whether they vote or do not vote, whether they are citizens or not citizens, whether they are kids or seniors, we are just going to count every person as one person.

I could not disagree more with this really kind-of wild Republican idea of the so-called "Equal Representation Act," which would only count certain in this country in complete violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, again, a post-Civil War amendment. I do not know anybody here that wants to go back to sort of pre-Civil War times or pre-Civil War Constitution. My office, just like every office here, when somebody calls, you do not ask, hey, are you a citizen. You ask, are you a constituent, how can I help you? We need every single person counted and, in fact, if there is a citizenship question on the Census, we then would be admitting that we want to undercount people because all the data points to the idea that this undercounts people. And the point of the Census is to follow the

Constitution and count the number of people. It is not to figure out who is a citizen or a non-citizen. It is to find out by the Constitution how many people live in each state. And, Mr. Santos, isn't it correct that the Census plays a role in counting the number of people for electoral purposes, but then also counts the number of people to determine how many Federal dollars go into a state?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. CASAR. And so, if a state has a falsely low Census count, that could result in those states getting fewer Federal resources for things like food for the hungry, hospitals, education.

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. CASAR. And so, a state like Texas, having had an undercount, could result in fewer dollars coming to my state for people that pay their taxes and might need those dollars.

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. CASAR. And so, if we ask a citizenship question when the Constitution says that we need to count the number of people, not the number of citizens, then it could result, in my state that was already undercounted, getting further undercounted, and could result in places like Texas getting fewer Federal resources.

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. CASAR. What I do not get is in the Federal Government's nearly \$1 trillion in assistance—so all of the people that work in this country, they send their hard-earned tax dollars here, then we send back about a trillion dollars back to the states—I do not understand why my Republican colleagues would want states like Texas to get less help because of adding an unnecessary question. What I think I hear is some sort of conspiracy theory that Democrats want there to be more immigrants so that we can have better shots in elections, which is just nuts. And frankly, the people who have immigrated this country and then decide to become citizens and are given a chance to become citizens, they actually listen to their leaders just like any other voter, and they decide how to vote. There are plenty of people in my district that vote for me or vote against me who were born in this country and who were not born in this country.

And I think that at the end of the day, it is so important for the American people to understand and hear that this idea of a citizenship question would undercount people, would result in fewer Federal resources come into places like Texas. So, Texans on the Republican side that are for this bill are just basically saying, send your taxpayer dollars elsewhere. And third, it would take us back to a pre-Civil War reality, and that is just a shameful thing from the Republicans. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Greene from Georgia.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hello, Mr. Santos.

Director SANTOS. Hello.

Ms. GREENE. Thanks for coming to talk with us today. There has been a lot of discussion back and forth today about reapportionment and how districts of Congress are drawn. There is also a lot of discussion going on about how much Federal dollars goes to different states based on the number of people that are counted up in the Census and assigned to these states and districts. It is ex-

tremely concerning, though, for most Americans that the 2020 Census was found to have several miscounts, and you have been asked about this today in this hearing. Even more concerning is the fact that most of the miscalculations either benefited blue states with overcounts or harmed red states with undercounts. As you have already told us, eight states were overcounted in the 2020 Census, six of which were blue states, six states were undercounted, five of which were red states.

Mr. Santos, understanding that you were not the Director yet in 2020, why do you think these miscounts happened?

Director SANTOS. The miscounts occurred just as a matter of course of any decennial census. No census has ever been perfect, but they have always been good enough for the purposes that they are intended, so this is simply how things shook out. There was absolutely no consideration of red, blue, purple, or whatever. We simply stuck to our mission to do a complete count, we did our quality checks, and we published the data to the President.

Ms. GREENE. And, Mr. Santos, you have described yourself as a scientist today. Isn't it important to be accurate in your science, so to speak, and in counting? Also, there is an actual law, Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, that really is your job to fine people \$5,000 for refusing to answer questions on the Census. Was this a law that you enforced? Did you enforce this law in states that were overcounted and states that were undercounted after the Census?

Director SANTOS. Yes, we are a statistical agency, not an enforcement agency, so we have never enforced that.

Ms. GREENE. So, no one was fined. So, there were overcounts, there were undercounts, and no one was fined according to the law, and the numbers shook out and were accepted. Many of my colleagues have brought up the fact that Article I of the Constitution requires a census every 10 years to determine how many congressional seats and electoral votes states receive. This is incredibly important. In Congress, with close party margins, this apportionment can be the difference between being in the Majority and being in the Minority. In tight Presidential elections—thankfully this one was not tight at all, President Trump overwhelmingly won—but it can determine the winner, these apportionments can. In other words, the Census is more than a mere survey of the demographics of the citizenry. It directly affects election integrity.

Mr. Santos, do you believe it is important that our elections be secure and that only legal voters be counted for apportionment purposes?

Director SANTOS. That is a policy question of who should vote and who should not. We are a statistical agency. We are non-partisan, and so I will leave it at that.

Ms. GREENE. Right. Well, hopefully in this next Congress and under the next President, we can make a change. We have a bill, H.R. 7109, the Equal Representation Act. This bill would statutorily add a citizenship question to the Decennial Census for 2030 and beyond, and it will exclude aliens from the apportionment base. The Senate has not taken up this bill yet, but hopefully they will next session, and this way there will be a citizenship question and non-citizens will no longer be included in the count for re-

apportionment when that is done. This certainly would change the makeup of Congress.

But let us also talk about some of my colleagues across the aisle have brought up that Black and Brown voters were not counted in the Census as well. One of my colleagues from Texas was saying that this led to two more White representatives being sent to the House of Representatives. I think it is important to note that Black and Brown people can vote Republican as well, and they do not have to vote Democrat every single time. Mr. Chairman, I have run out of time. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Brown.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Director Santos for taking time to be here today.

Supporting children and families is one of our most deeply held American values. It is a reflection of our collective commitment to helping one another, particularly in times of need. To uphold this principle, accurate Census data plays a critical role in ensuring vital Federal resources are allocated where they are most needed. The Census Bureau work directly impacts effectiveness of programs families rely on every day, programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the WIC Program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, known as TANF, provide critical lifelines ensuring parents can put food on the table and care for their children. Meanwhile, the National School Lunch Program helps eliminate hunger as a barrier to learning, giving children the opportunity to focus on their education instead of their next meal. Without accurate Census data, these programs cannot be funded or distributed equitably, risking the well-being of millions of families. This data ensures no child or family is left behind and our shared resources are directed toward building a stronger, more compassionate Nation.

Director Santos, can you explain how population data collected by the Census Bureau, including during the Decennial Census, is relied upon by the Federal Government in carrying out programs like SNAP, WIC, TANF, and the National School Lunch Program?

Director SANTOS. Certainly, and thank you for the question. The information captured in the Decennial Census feeds into how we conduct all of our other 130 surveys that are conducted—pretty much every day of the year we are out collecting information on behalf of the American public. That information ends up being used in pretty much most policy development and implementation, whether it is in transportation, whether it is in labor, in education, in natural disaster planning, in a whole variety of ways, not to mention business, business, business. The corporate world, the business world, our economy cannot survive without accurate data from the Census Bureau that starts with a Decennial Census count and then feeds into the other programs.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. Each month, nearly 1.5 million Ohioans and over 150,000 people in my district receive SNAP benefits, and in 2022, Ohio received over \$720 million in TANF funding. Because of Census data, every student who attends Cleveland Public Schools is afforded a free breakfast and lunch without the hassle of paperwork. To get these resources to people in Ohio, the Federal Government must accurately assess who is in need and where they

live. So, Director Santos, would you agree having complete, accurate population and demographic data is essential in allowing policy-makers to direct funding in a fair and equitable way?

Director SANTOS. I agree.

Ms. BROWN. And Director Santos, what expertise does the Census Bureau rely on to collect population and demographic data?

Director SANTOS. We have expert scientists who access both administrative records, you know, births, deaths, as well as other sources of Federal data, as well as our massive data collection operation to conduct the surveys and the economic census and the census of governments and such. So, we have this expansive ability to capture petabytes of information that are used to make society better.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, and given the role the Census Bureau plays in collecting this data, which is the foundation of programs so many families rely on, it is critical this work is guided by data, statistics, and expert analysis. It should not be fueled by politics. We do not and must not prioritize recipients or anything else based on political ideology. Yet President-elect Trump's playbook for his second term, Project 2025, includes a section specifically on the Census Bureau, which calls for it to "execute a conservative agenda." As we have heard here, this work is too important to be caught up in political games. This Project 2025 proposal is dangerous and threatens to hurt families across Ohio and the country. The Census Bureau must not be turned into an ideological and political arm of any agenda, and I am committing to ensuring that it does not. And with that Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Fry from South Carolina.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director Santos, thank you for being here today.

The Census Bureau is charged with a constitutional mandate that impacts every single American: ensuring fair representation in Congress and Census results that allocate critical resources across our states. Unfortunately, the 2020 Census, as has been highlighted before, revealed significant flaws in its execution with miscounts that unfairly shifted congressional representation and distorted the allocation of electoral college votes. States like Texas and Florida were undercounted while states like New York and Rhode Island were overcounted. The discrepancy disproportionately harmed Republican-leaning states, as Ms. Greene talked about, while benefiting Democrat-leaning ones.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a 2022 Heritage Foundation report that highlights the multiple miscounts of the 2020 Census.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. FRY. Thank you.

According to this report, the 2020 Census miscounting errors had far-reaching consequences: distorting congressional representation, reallocating electoral votes, and misdirecting over \$1.5 trillion over 10 years in Federal funding. These resources were unequally distributed with overcounted states benefiting at the expense of the undercounted ones.



Director, I want to ask you, the 2020 Post-Enumeration Survey identified significant overcounts in states like New York and undercounts in states like Texas. What specific factors contributed to these discrepancies?

Director SANTOS. If you take a look at some of the data, there tended to be higher concentrations of Latinos and African Americans in some of the states that were undercounted.

Mr. FRY. Were these errors more pronounced compared to previous censuses, and why?

Director SANTOS. If you go back enough censuses, they were relatively comparable. There are always some—there typically are states that were overcounted or undercounted.

Mr. FRY. You know, the Heritage Foundation report that I talked about earlier highlighted that \$1.5 trillion in Federal funds could be misapplied because of these miscounts. How is the Census Bureau addressing these financial consequences?

Director SANTOS. Well, what we are actually doing is trying to make sure that folks understand that vehicles like the Post-Enumeration Survey and the demographic analysis, as well as the actual decennial censuses are basically glimpses at what the perfect truth is. So, even the Post-Enumeration Study that we conducted was subject to the same challenges, perhaps even more so, than occurred in the 2020 Census. The PES, while it estimated and we stand by the overcount and undercounts, it is a glimpse of what occurred. There are natural error bands around that, so we do not know what the truth is. If you assume the PES is the absolute truth, then, yes, those conclusions can be made, but the reality is it could be anywhere within those margins of error.

Mr. FRY. You would agree with me that the miscounts impacted congressional apportionment across the states?

Director SANTOS. They can, relative to the truth, but no one ever knows what the truth is.

Mr. FRY. Well, that is kind of the role of the Census Bureau, quite frankly, but it would, and it did, have an impact on what states got however many seats—is that correct—from the 2020 Census?

Director SANTOS. Yes. The 2020 Census determines congressional apportionment.

Chairman COMER. OK. And the miscounts had a direct impact on some states not getting a seat and other states retaining a seat that they otherwise would not have?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Chairman COMER. OK. How does the Census Bureau plan to prevent these errors from 2020 in the Census of 2030?

Director SANTOS. Yes. We, basically, are taking an approach that we need to identify the populations and communities that contributed most to these challenges of counting everybody once, only once, and in the right place, and are doing specific testing and developing methodologies and leveraging technology and administrative data and such, so that we can go into those communities and get better counts through better participation. A lot that involves a recognition of trust issues in local communities, and so we are actively engaging in a continuous contact and engagement with local communities, with elected officials, et cetera, which is why we

have been very active since 2022, and even before, in terms of doing that type of outreach, talking to communities, getting to understand their concerns, and then working with them toward 2030.

Mr. FRY. Thank you. Does the Bureau acknowledge that including noncitizens in apportionment unfairly dilutes representation for U.S. citizens?

Director SANTOS. We simply provide the numbers, Congressman, and that is the best answer I can give to that.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see that my time has expired, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair recognizes Ms. Tlaib. And I apologize for skipping—that is what it says here. If I pick, let me think. Tlaib.

[Laughter.]

Mr. COMER. Tlaib. That is what my list says, "Tlaib."

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Director, for being here. I do not know if you know, but I grew up in the most beautiful, Blackest city in the country, the city of Detroit, and you know there has been outdated methods right now impacted by our Census, and that is probably why our city filed a lawsuit. I think it is important for folks to know. Is it true that, I think it is like, long vacant homes are subtracted from our population count?

Director SANTOS. Thank you for the question. That is an issue that is currently under litigation, so we cannot comment on that.

Ms. TLAIB. But currently, you cannot even talk about the fact that right now—

Director SANTOS. Correct. Correct.

Ms. TLAIB [continuing]. Like, an abandoned home is subtracted from the population.

Director SANTOS. I am simply following the advice of general counsel.

Ms. TLAIB. Well, that must be true then. OK. So then how are we counting rehabbed/reoccupied? So, we have 6,000 homes that are now reoccupied, been rehabbed beautifully. How do we count those in the Census?

Director SANTOS. Rehabbed homes? We count them.

Ms. TLAIB. You do count them.

Director SANTOS. We send individuals.

Ms. TLAIB. No, no, what we understand is—

Director SANTOS. Our protocols—

Ms. TLAIB [continuing]. Six-thousand homes that were previously vacant, are now been rehabbed, that they were not being counted properly or maybe put into the method.

Director SANTOS. Congresswoman, if I may, if you can provide the question in a more generic national context, I can answer. If you are specifically talking about Detroit, I am not allowed to answer.

Ms. TLAIB. OK. Without updated methods, which we need to update some methods—you know this, it is not just Detroit—many communities because of these policies, it is guaranteed that they will be chronically undercounted.

Director SANTOS. We use actually some very good methods to ensure that any housing unit that is occupied gets counted.

Ms. TLAIB. Mm-hmm. So, it is not just new construction.

Director SANTOS. It is not just—it is hidden housing units. It is units on tribal lands that are hidden without mailable addresses——

Ms. TLAIB. Formally vacant——

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. TLAIB [continuing]. Abandoned homes, then they are reoccupied.

Director SANTOS. We even go out to the homeless and look for people living out of cars and dilapidated RVs.

Ms. TLAIB. OK. So, directing in a different direction, I also have one of the largest concentration of Arab Americans, as you know, and it is not fair not to ask you the same question I asked the previous Director of the Census. Do I look white to you?

Director SANTOS. Yes, I would say no.

Ms. TLAIB. OK. Well good. That was a better answer than the previous one, but I am really glad to see that MENA—the Middle East, North-African category—is going to be included in the next Census. Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Ms. TLAIB. One of the things regarding implementation matters, as you know, how is the Census Bureau making sure that MENA communities at risk of being left out of data collection due to lack of visibility on collection forms, such as Armenian-American community as well as the Afro-Arab community, are properly accounted for?

Director SANTOS. Well, we have a process that actually involves community engagement. As you may know, we have been not only visiting all communities in the U.S., specifically, I have made multiple trips to Detroit to speak not only to the African-American communities, but to the business communities, to the Arab-American communities and such. So, we are using those processes to help address that.

Ms. TLAIB. OK. Director, one of the things that is important, and I worked at a nonprofit organization, I felt like I needed to answer a lot of the questions that were asked by my colleagues because the Census numbers impact even how we look at breast cancer among women, you know. I look at the high rate of breast cancer increasing among, you know, Arab-American women and how we are doing research around that. And again, we have been invisible for so long, decades long been invisible to our own Federal Government, being labeled in a way, tucked in, and kind of hidden. But one thing that I hope we are doing in the implementation process, Director, is the work underway with the Federal agencies to implement these new standards and data collection—how are you prioritizing the collection reporting of that data beyond the minimum reporting categories?

Director SANTOS. Yes. We look to implement the directives of OMB on how to capture race and ethnicity according to the regulation. Our starting point is to have as much disaggregation, as much detail in different races, ethnicities, multi-race, multi-ethnicities, and tribes as possible so the American public can actually understand who we are as a Nation. We are basically doing our due diligence to make sure that we can provide that data.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Director. I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes, and, Director, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have consistently said that the Census Bureau should not be partisan, it should be nonpartisan. I agree completely. And they say it should not be political. I agree with that. The problem is the mistakes that were made in the last Census have huge political consequences. By looking at the undercount in the red states and the overcount in the blue states, it is very safe to say that between three and four congressional seats were distorted because of the mistake of the Census. I am a hundred percent confident those three or four seats would have been Republican based on the voting patterns in the last election in those states and the margins of victory for Trump and defeat for Harris.

When you are talking about three or four seats in Congress, that is the margin of this Congress. That is everything. That depends on who is chairman of the committee and the policy and the direction. It is of the utmost significance to the whole political system in America. And I know you were not Director during the last Census. The last Director was Steven Dillingham, and I was on this Committee. This Committee, by the way, has legislative jurisdiction over the Census, and I publicly made Statements of my concern about how the Census was being conducted because we did have the COVID pandemic.

And I guess my question is, I am still trying to understand, during a normal year of census, you have all these Census workers. I have friends that used to work part-time for the Census. If someone did not fill out their application, then, let us say in 2010 or in the previous a hundred years, someone from the Census would knock on their door and help them fill out their form. How was that conducted during COVID? I would assume that there were a significant number of doors that were never knocked on because of COVID than there were estimates that were made, right? Can you briefly explain how that worked? I mean, do you have any idea, certainly what percentage of homes were never contacted, what percentage of the homes, that did not fill out the Census forms or the online form or whatever, were never contacted?

Director SANTOS. To my knowledge, if a home was sent a mailable address, and——

Chairman COMER. That is always the way it has been done, and there are always a significant number that do not fill them out, and then someone from the Census would knock on their door, but they did not the last time because of COVID restrictions. Is that correct?

Director SANTOS. That is not correct.

Chairman COMER. If you are saying every house in America got knocked on——

Director SANTOS. That is not correct. I am saying that we had a protocol that sent out a multiple mailings. People either respond, self-respond, or they did not. If they did not, that kicked in the next phase called the non-response follow-up, and it is that subset of houses that gets knocked on.

Chairman COMER. And every person that did not respond was greeted by a Census employee——

Director SANTOS. Every household——

Chairman COMER. Every household?

Director SANTOS. To my knowledge.

Chairman COMER. How then was there such a mistake in the Census? Many of us believe that the Federal agencies are populated with hyper-partisan, left-wing extremists and just so many mistakes that are made, big mistakes, in this town always just mysteriously benefit Democrats at the expense of Republicans. So, the purpose of this hearing is we are going to be watching the Census and we expect it to be pretty accurate. You mentioned technology—you use technology in helping to count. How many employees, full-time, right now are in the Census?

Director SANTOS. Full time? I am guessing around 10,000 because—

Chairman COMER. Ten thousand.

Mr. SANTOS [continuing]. Not only do we—

Chairman COMER. I know that does not count how many you hire part-time during in the Census here, but 10,000.

Director SANTOS. We have six regional—

Chairman COMER. You mentioned the adoption of technology and AI and all of that. Do you still need 10,000 employees or because of technology, can the Census get by with less employees?

Director SANTOS. Well, keep in mind, Congressman, that we have three different censuses. Two of the 3, we do every 5 years, economic census and—

Chairman COMER. Are they any more accurate than the last one? And let me say this, according to recent projections, the states that voted for their electors for Kamala Harris are poised to lose as many as 12 seats. If the projections continue, you would assume more people are probably going to move out of New York, and more people are going to move to South Carolina and Florida and some of other states. More people are moving to Arizona, Montana, the Dakotas, out of California, so it is of the utmost importance that we have confidence in the Census. And I will be honest with you, I did not have confidence in the Census the last time, and that was not under you and that was in the Trump Administration. We are trying to determine now whether we are going to have confidence in the Census moving forward. And I just think it is very important that every one of those 10,000 employees in the Census understand that we are watching the Census and we expect with the technology, with the massive budget you have, with all these Federal employees, we expect a better product than what we got in this last Census because this last Census was not acceptable. It was political, and we were very disappointed in the Census Bureau.

So, with that, the Chair now recognizes Mr. Goldman.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would warn you not to sleep on New York, but I do want to address one thing that you just said that I found interesting. Mr. Santos, does the Census count determine the House districts in each state?

Director SANTOS. No, it does not.

Mr. GOLDMAN. No, it does not. So, when the Chairman says that 100 percent of the three or four seats that were miscounted would be Republican, that is not based on the Census numbers, right?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Director SANTOS. No, that is based on Republican gerrymandering. And I raise North Carolina as just one example. If you want to talk about the difference in the Majority in the House, North Carolina is pretty much a 50/50 state. And yet, this past cycle, the North Carolina legislature gerrymandered North Carolina to remove three Democratic seats and make three Republican safe seats, to go from a seven-seven split to a 10-4 split. Now, I think the Chairman would agree with me that three seats flipped right there make the difference in the Majority in the House. And it is, in fact, just an assumption of the Chairman that Republican states, where the Republican-controlled legislatures, would automatically make additional seats Republican, even though, as my colleague from Texas pointed out, the vast majority of new residents in Texas are in urban areas which traditionally vote Democratic rather than in areas that traditionally vote Republican. So, it is noteworthy that the assumption that, A, the Census was politically motivated, is based on nothing, and then the assumption that the results hurt Republicans, of course, is based on the assumption and expectation that Republicans would use gerrymandering to favor themselves.

I want to focus briefly on another issue that has been sort of percolating in this hearing, which is the issue of citizenship, and I believe you have said you have done some research on the impact of a citizenship question on the Census. Have you or your Agency estimated the number of people who would not respond if there were a citizenship question?

Director SANTOS. We have done research that gives those estimates. I would like to use that as a question for the record. We have the research, we are happy to provide.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Well, I have seen numbers of 9 million, which is quite significant, and am I correct that the Census, of course, is not just about apportionment, right? It determines a lot of different things. Am I correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Mr. GOLDMAN. And in fact, in 2021 alone, there were 353 Federal assistance programs that used the Census data to distribute \$2.8 trillion to communities across the country, and those programs obviously go to services, regardless of whether someone is a citizen or not. In fact, some of the Census data, am I correct, was essential in deploying recovery funding in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Now putting Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s views to the side, did the COVID virus ask people whether they were citizens or not before it infected them?

Director SANTOS. No.

Mr. GOLDMAN. No. The bottom line is we have heard voter fraud, which is, effectively, not a problem, and we have also heard a lot of misinformation coming from Mr. Trump about the purpose of immigration to increase voting and increase Democrats voting. In fact, Elon Musk has been a big, big believer in this bogus theory about how Democrats, I think he said, are deliberately doing voter importation to swing states and fast tracking them to citizenship. Are you aware of how long it takes for someone to get citizenship?

Director SANTOS. I am not aware of the specific, but I know that it takes many years.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Yes. On average, it often takes a lot more than 10 years. In fact, I was talking to some of my Republican colleagues who were citing examples of 13 and 14 years, and that was someone who was married to a naturalized citizen. So, this notion that there is some nefarious purpose to increase Democratic voting when, of course, voting requires citizenship, not being counted in the Census, is completely bogus, and we ought to debunk it right here, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. At the request of the witness, we will take a short 5-minute bathroom break, and pursuant to the previous order, the Committee stands in recess for 5 quick minutes.

Director SANTOS. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will come back to order.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Timmons from South Carolina.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you, Director Santos, for being here today.

The Decennial Census is absolutely critical to the functioning of our Federal Government. It determines how resources are allocated and how congressional representation is distributed across the country. As we look toward the 2030 Census, I am increasingly concerned about the impact of the policies from this Administration on its accuracy and fairness. Over the past 4 years, we have seen policies that, if left unchecked, could seriously distort the results, leading to skewed congressional apportionment. Today, I want to focus on how the Biden Administration's handling of the Southern border could undermine the integrity of the 2030 Census. It is essential that we take the necessary steps now to ensure a fair and accurate count in 2030.

Director Santos, while the number is likely drastically higher, can we at least agree that 5 million people have entered the country illegally in the last 4 years?

Director SANTOS. Thank you for the question, but I do not have access to that type of information.

Mr. TIMMONS. OK. NPR says 8 million. A lot of other think tanks go far higher, some as high as 15 to 20, so I mean, that is enough to fill a dozen plus congressional districts. So, do you think it is a problem if we are counting 10, 20 million people in the Census that are in this country illegally? Do you think that that is a challenge to achieving your objective of an accurate count for purposes of apportioning Federal dollars and reapportioning congressional districts?

Director SANTOS. It is certainly a challenge from the perspective of getting folks to participate in the Decennial Census, yes.

Mr. TIMMONS. What is the purpose of the Census?

Director SANTOS. It is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.

Mr. TIMMONS. To then apportion Federal tax dollars—

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. TIMMONS [continuing]. And to redistrict congressional districts.

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Mr. TIMMONS. OK. So, do you think that we should give people in this country illegally Federal tax dollars, and should they be given sway over how we reapportion our congressional districts?

Director SANTOS. That is a policy question that I will leave to the policy-makers. We simply focus on our mission to enumerate the entire population.

Mr. TIMMONS. OK. I think most Americans, the overwhelming majority, would think that if you are in this country illegally, you should not be getting Federal dollars, and currently, under the rules that we have in place, that is not happening because they are included in the Census, whether they are in this country legally or not. They are also receiving representation in Congress, skewing the results of the individuals that are legally allowed to vote, which, in turn, reduces American citizens' effective representation in Congress because they are getting a reduced benefit for being here legally and following the rules. So, it seems like a problem.

Director SANTOS. That is not for me to determine. We simply focus on our mission.

Mr. TIMMONS. OK. So, if we added additional questions regarding whether the individual was a citizen, whether they are born here, whether their parents are born here, naturalized—it would probably be helpful to know if they were a lawful permanent resident or a visa holder or whatever—that would give us an additional data point to then achieve the objective of the Census, would it not?

Director SANTOS. The objective of the Census is to count all people—

Mr. TIMMONS. For purposes of apportioning Federal tax dollars and redistricting.

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Mr. TIMMONS. So, again, it seems kind of silly that we are sitting here talking about whether we should achieve the purpose of the Census or some other purpose, because we are not achieving the purpose of the Census if we are not getting that additional data point. We have been fighting about this for years, and there has been little cooperation from across the aisle. In 2019, President Trump tried to add the citizenship question to the Census to better understand this issue. It was blocked by congressional Democrats. In May of this year, the House passed H.R. 7109, which would statutorily add a question to the Census, and 7 months later that bill is still sitting in the Senate under Majority Leader Schumer's control awaiting action. This is going to be addressed next Congress, if not in the next few months, but this should not be an issue.

I have heard countless arguments and rebuttals from my colleagues across the aisle regarding the citizenship question that we have been advocating for since 2017. It just seems bizarre to me that we are still having this conversation when, if you are in this country illegally, you do not deserve the benefit of Federal taxpayer dollars, and you do not deserve the benefit to reduce the effectiveness of a citizen's vote.

I am running out of time. Are you planning to use AI in the next Census? There are a lot of different data points that you could use



to more accurately reflect the true count. Is there any way that you are going to be using new technology to address that?

Director SANTOS. We are going to be using new technology to improve counts, yes.

Mr. TIMMONS. I am out of time. Thank you very much. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Ocasio-Cortez from New York.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. You know, there is a lot of hay being made in this hearing about undercounts, overcounts, but importantly, and attribution of motivation around differences in counts. Director Santos, thank you so much for being with us here today. First and foremost, undercounts and overcounts are standard in every Census to any degree, correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. We have a massive undertaking of trying to count and fulfill our constitutional responsibility of counting what we now know is over 300 million people in the United States, correct?

Director SANTOS. That is correct.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. So, of course, there is going to be some parents that maybe have a kid in college and they count them as part of their household, that kid in college, they want to be counted as their own adult, and so sometimes you will have some doubling up, and very casual situations like that, correct?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. And then it is the Census' responsibility to try to mitigate some of that and sort all of that out, correct?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Now there is so much being made about the fact that there were some overcounts and undercounts in the 2020 Census. I have one pretty simple question for you. Who was President in 2020?

Director SANTOS. Donald Trump.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Donald Trump was President in 2020, and yet there seems to be some suggestion that there was some political motivation to somehow help Democrats in the administration of the Census. Now, given that Donald Trump was President, I find that odd, but let us approach this deeper suggestion, that I will just say it, what I have seen an allusion to is that there was some deep state conspiracy to try to somehow change or manipulate the U.S. Census counts. But we were here, I was here with the Chairman during that time as well. There was a pandemic going on, and I have reporting here on a letter from senior Census officials at that time, identifying, in fact, the opposite, attempted political interference of crucial aspects, technical aspects of the count, and political pressure to take shortcuts to make the count worse.

Now, Director Santos, that aside, you are a nonpartisan member of the government, but I do have a question. Is it accurate to say that the Administration during President Trump's presidency did push to try to cut the Census short, a shorter timeline than typical, before the count was completed?

Director SANTOS. That is my understanding.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. So, the count was cut short. President Trump decided to shorten that Census count. And, you know, when we talk about areas that may have been undercounted, including some, what we see now, Republican-leaning areas, a lot of times those can be rural areas, correct?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. So, we have rural areas, and that oftentimes requires more time to accurately count, and to the Chairman's question, having door-to-door canvassers in a rural area, it takes more time to canvas a rural area, correct?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Because you have people who live miles apart as opposed to an urban area where multiple people live in the same building, correct?

Director SANTOS. Yes.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. So, cutting a Census short, when the Trump Administration pushed to cut the Census count short, he was hurting areas that were rural and happen, as we know, may vote with him, but that is separate from a political determination on the Census, correct?

Director SANTOS. Correct.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. So, this brings me to what we often know as Hanlon's razor, which is to not ascribe to malice what can be more easily attributed to stupidity and a lack of proper governance. And when President Trump decided to cut the Census short and make a decision that hurt his own political constituency, I do not think that that is something that can be ascribed to the non-partisan public servants who simply have to carry out his own orders, correct?

Director SANTOS. I am not quite sure what the question was.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. OK. Let me restate this. Would you say that the Census Bureau was following President Trump's Administration's, his orders, and following his guidance on the timeline of the Census, and basically had to do their best with the limited resources they were given?

Director SANTOS. We followed the rule of law, and we did the best we could with our resources, yes.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you very much, and to that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. It does not appear there are any other questioners here. We are waiting for Ms. Pressley.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from National Urban League; a statement by the Honorable Mark Shepherd, Republican Mayor of Clearfield, Utah; and questions from Representative Thomas Suozzi.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Perfect. Thank you very much.

I would also like to seek to enter into the record articles from the *New York Times* on "New York Losing House Seats After 89 Short on the Census."

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you very much.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Stansbury from New Mexico.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Well, good afternoon, everyone. Thank you to Director Santos for your diligence in spending the day with us, answering questions about the United States Census.

I am proud to represent New Mexico's 1st Congressional District, which includes Albuquerque and 10 counties in Central New Mexico, and the United States Census is absolutely essential to my communities and an accurate count is very essential to my communities because we are tribal communities, we are rural communities, we are low-income communities, and the Census is essential for not only capturing, of course, who is there, what their backgrounds are, where they live, but it is absolutely essential for all of the Federal services that our communities depend on to survive, everything from housing programs to food programs, to roads, you name it, the United States Census is how we make sure that there is a fair assessment.

And as has been noted this morning, the impact during 2020 of having the pandemic happen in the middle was, in many ways, very catastrophic, not only obviously for the fact that many people got sick, but because it happened at the most critical moment that we were trying to assess what was going on in our communities. And, you know, I for one, want to say thank you to all of our Census workers out there, not just the enumerators that were hired to go out there and to work with the Fair Count organizations that stepped up to the plate, but to the people who do the hard work behind the scenes.

Many people know this about me because I say it almost every time here in the Oversight Committee, but I am a former OMB employee, and OMB plays a critical role also in managing the Census and making sure that the way in which we structure the Census makes sense, reflects our most contemporary ideas about the purpose of the Census. But I think it is important, and I know a number of folks here today have pointed out that the real purpose of the Census, which goes back to our founding as a country, goes back to the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, where it states very clearly that the apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives is based on a count of the whole persons in each state. And we conduct censuses to really just understand where are the humans? And, you know, there has been some rhetoric here this morning about should we count immigrants, should we count people who are from somewhere else?

And, you know, I think it is important to maybe, like, step back and take a moment because unless you are indigenous, unless your people have lived on this continent for thousands of years, of which we have many, many people, your families are immigrants. And when your people came to this country, whether they came of their own accord or because they were brought here, they were counted because we had censuses and they appeared in censuses. And for my colleagues across the aisle that do not realize this, I really encourage you, go on your own genealogical journeys, find your ancestors. For me, many of my ancestors are Irish, and looking at the Census records, it is amazing. You find your immigrant family is born in Ireland in X County and came here in 1851. We do that.

That is a record of the humans that are in this country and how they got here.

So, the arguments that we are hearing here this morning that immigrants should not be counted is un-American. It is literally un-American. It is really about sowing a narrative, a political narrative that is being propagated for political reasons. We know that in the wake of this election, Donald Trump has promised that he wants to do a mass deportation scheme. During his last presidency, he tried to force Federal workers in the United States Census to add a question about citizenship that was not for the purposes of just good government and making sure that folks would, you know, be counted. It was for the purpose that people could be identified and targeted should they actually carry out some of their more nefarious mass deportation schemes.

So, I think it is really important that people understand this is not good government arguments. This is based on a political desire, one, to identify immigrants in a time and a place when immigrants are being targeted by the incoming election and the incoming administration and that they are talking about, like, transforming the Federal Government. And I just heard some language here a few moments ago from some of my friends across the aisle where they said, we want the Federal Census employees to know we are watching you. That should be chilling. We are the Oversight Committee, and our job is to conduct oversight, but it is not to intimidate Federal employees, and that is wrong, and we are going to fight it. So, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Maybe we just let them work from home. The Chair recognizes Ms. Pressley from Massachusetts.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Director Santos, thank you for being here today.

The work of the Census Bureau is essential to our democracy. I often remind people that if you are not being counted in the eyes of the Federal Government, you do not count, but, of course, this work is far more than simply counting people. By providing comprehensive and accurate data, it gives us the tools necessary to ensure the Federal Government truly serves all communities. We rely on this data to be responsive to issues experienced by everyone who calls this country home, ranging from policy enactment to resource allocation. For example, the data from the Census Bureau on religious affiliation was critical to ensure our Jewish and Muslim siblings receive support during moments of heightened antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Director Santos, you are constantly improving the Census survey and data analysis. How have the recent updates to race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation impacted our understanding of disparities across policy areas, like healthcare and housing?

Director SANTOS. Well, thank you very much for that question. With regard to the revised race and ethnicity standards, they are still in the process of being implemented. However, having said that, in the 2020 Census, we were able to capture additional granularity on multiple races and ethnicities. So, if the line said, are you African American or Black, you could check "yes," and underneath it would say, and what else? And you could record Latino or Asian or whatever. And so, we have some very rich data on over 300

racess, ethnicities, and mixtures of multi-races, multi-ethnicities, multi-race ethnicities, as well as over 1,200 individual tribes. So, we have very granular data that can really paint the portrait of who we are as a Nation.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Well, before I move on, speaking of granularity, is that true for the AAPI community as well because there has long been an effort to have that in more of a disaggregate.

Director SANTOS. Yes, it is.

Ms. PRESSLEY. OK.

Director SANTOS. The current regulation for race and ethnicity includes disaggregated.

Ms. PRESSLEY. OK, wonderful. I mean, again, at a time when diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are under coordinated and unrelenting attacks, including from some in this room, the importance of the Census Bureau's mission really cannot be overstated enough, but it is under threat and with what was once called Project 2025 is now simply Trump's agenda. Extremist conservatives are trying to weaken the Census. Director Santos, what are the potential harms of not collecting accurate and detailed racial data?

Director SANTOS. By not accurately collecting that information, we are then at a loss to be able to help communities in all aspects of policy-making and service, whether it comes to which routes to have for public transportation, to the types of schooling and what languages would be provided at schools, at health centers. Public health is a huge issue. Public safety would be a huge issue, infrastructure, all aspects of society.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you. And so, bearing that in mind, how is the Bureau safeguarding against actions or policies that could undermine the diversity and inclusivity of Census data?

Director SANTOS. Well, we basically are hyper-focused on our mission to collect the most accurate statistical data and provide it to the public. And we live our values of scientific integrity and independence and objectivity and transparency, and by living those values, that is a very powerful mechanism by which we can prevent against any meddling as we have seen in the past.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you, Director. Every community deserves to be seen, heard, and invested in, and there should be no erasure. We have a moral responsibility to ensure that the Federal Government does not forget the people it serves, and that means ensuring everyone can identify themselves fully and authentically. And I will just take a note of personal privilege to say, I continue to be incredibly frustrated at the injustice that we have incarcerated individuals being counted according to where they are being warehoused instead of being counted according to the communities that they are from, destabilized and communities that have been divested from and underfunded, which often led them to a pathway to incarceration. So, I just wanted to say that, but again, thank you, and I yield back.

Director SANTOS. Thank you.

Mr. COMER. The gentlelady yields back. That appears to conclude the questioning for today. Director, we appreciate your attendance here today, and I know Representative Palmer and maybe a few more Representatives had some follow-up questions for you.

So, with that, and without objection, all Members have 5 legislative days within which to submit materials and additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses.

If there is no further business, and I might add that we will be in communication throughout the next Congress because, again, this Committee has legislative jurisdiction over the Census. And as you can see today, there is a lot of concern moving forward to ensure that there is an accurate count, and there will be an emphasis on every government agency to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent correctly, wisely, efficiently.

So, if there is no further business, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:56 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

