



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Jimenez
Councilmember Peralez

SUBJECT: 2020 Census Resolution

DATE: March 26, 2020

Approved

Date

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution to monitor, protect, and defend the confidentiality of resident information provided to the Federal Government through the 2020 Census from breach and misuse, and to support outreach activities to ensure a complete count and broad participation in the Census as a way to guarantee that marginalized and hard-to-count communities participate in the Census without fear.

BACKGROUND

The Census as mandated by the Constitution counts every person living in the United States and five U.S. territories every ten years. The U.S. Census Bureau is obligated to count every person - regardless of age, immigration status, gender, race, or ethnicity. An accurate Census count is critical because the data provided informs everything from the distribution of billions of dollars in federal funding to the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and how congressional and state legislative districts are drawn.

An accurate census count is imperative to San José because nearly \$700 billion in federal programs and \$76 billion in state programs are on the table for local communities to benefit from. Though it is difficult to know exactly how many individuals were not counted in 2010, it is reasonable to assume that thousands went uncounted, resulting in an annual financial loss in millions of dollars.

As the third largest city in California and one of the most diverse, San José must guarantee that fear is not a factor in Census participation. The constant attacks on immigrants and communities of color by the current federal administration has created mistrust in the census process and a high risk of a severe undercount of immigrant, refugee, homeless, and other hard-to-count communities. In 2017, San José took the bold move to sue the Trump administration for its attempt to include citizenship status as a question on the 2020 Census. Mayor Liccardo stated, "Adding a citizenship question to the 2020 Census will stoke fears... in diverse cities like San

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José, threatening hundreds of millions in funding for health, education, and other critical services upon which our entire community depends.” Strong pushback from several states and cities ultimately led to the question being removed from the Census. Though the removal of the citizenship question was a victory, many other factors such as the Coronavirus, mistrust in the government and language barriers are still likely to impact Census participation.

According to a survey by the Public Policy Institute of California, 63% of Californians are concerned about whether the Census Bureau will keep their responses confidential, as the law requires. The concern is most acute among Latinos (74%) and African Americans (74%) and Asian Americans (64%). Immigrants are also much more likely to be concerned than US-born residents.

San José now has an opportunity to reiterate the importance of full census participation and its commitment to the protection of confidential information. By passing a strong resolution pledging to monitor and protect confidential data from breach and misuse, we are sending residents the clear message that our City values their participation in the 2020 Census and that we stand in solidarity with immigrants, people of color, and other marginalized communities.

For questions please contact Vanessa Sandoval, Chief of Staff, at (408) 535-4925.