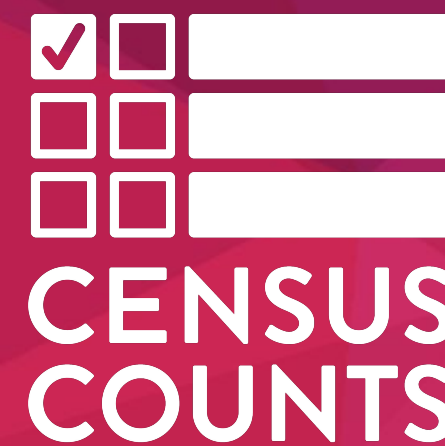




The Leadership Conference  
Education Fund



# Ensuring an Accurate Count:

## Proposed Changes to the 2030 Census and How To Take Action

+ 2030 CENSUS

### ACT BY OCTOBER 13, 2026

On September 10, 2026, the Census Bureau [proposed significant changes](#) to the rules governing the 2030 Census. If implemented, the proposal would change who is included in the congressional apportionment count, how the Census Bureau determines where people are counted, and what demographic information can be collected on census enumeration questionnaires. The Bureau is also seeking public comment on whether to include a legal-status question on the 2030 Census questionnaire.

These changes could have significant consequences for congressional representation, redistricting, civil rights enforcement, community planning, and the quality and usefulness of census data which underpin public and private data-sets used for decision-making.

#### Additional Resources

- [TALKING POINTS](#): Talking points for specific sectors/issues (business, immigration, voting rights, health, schools, infrastructure)
- [TEMPLATE](#): Letter to request an extension
- [TEMPLATE](#): Comment letter opposing proposed changes

### AT A GLANCE:

A proposed rule for the decennial census is seeking to change who is counted, where they are counted, and what questions can be asked. Changes include excluding any non-U.S. citizens without a green card from the apportionment count, eliminating questions about race and ethnicity, banning questions about sexual orientation, and determining where people are counted based on tax records.

### The stakes are significant.

These changes could affect political representation, the quality and usefulness of census data, community planning, and public confidence and participation in the census—making some communities less visible in the data used to understand and serve the nation and making the data used by all communities inaccurate.

### Take Action!

- [Submit a public comment by October 13, 2026](#). Tell the Census Bureau how the proposed changes could affect your community and urge the Bureau not to adopt them.
- **Call for more time to respond**. Submit or sign on to a letter asking the Census Bureau to extend the public comment period through December 10.
- **Spread the word**. Share the proposed changes, comment deadline, and available resources with your networks and encourage others to submit comments.



# BREAKDOWN:

## PROPOSED RULE:

## Why it matters:

**Requires the Census Bureau to exclude any non-U.S. citizens without a green card from the congressional apportionment count.**

- This would change who is included in the population used to determine each state's representation in Congress. Under the proposal, foreign citizens who are not U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents would be excluded from the apportionment count, even if they live in the United States.
  - This could exclude millions of residents, including many who are lawfully present, such as:
    - International students and temporary workers
    - People with temporary or other non-permanent immigration statuses, such as H-1B visa holders
    - Some refugees, people seeking or granted asylum, and others who have been granted waivers
    - Undocumented immigrants.
- The proposal outlines two ways for the Census Bureau to identify who would be excluded:
  1. Raising the possibility of asking an immigration status question of all household members (which has never been asked before)
  2. Using administrative records (which can be inaccurate and incomplete) to verify residence and determine immigration status

**Both approaches raise important questions about data accuracy, privacy, implementation, and their potential effect on census participation.**

**Eliminates race and ethnicity data collection.**

- The census has collected information on race [since 1790](#), and race and ethnicity data are crucial for:
  - Understanding population change and how communities are growing and changing over time.
  - Identifying health disparities in outcomes such as life expectancy, disease, and access to care.
  - Measuring disparities and progress in education, employment, economic mobility, and business ownership.
  - Helping businesses make informed decisions about hiring, investment, products, and services.
  - Supporting state and local planning, including emergency preparedness, disaster response, and public services.
  - Enforcing civil rights and anti-discrimination laws, including the Voting Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act.

**Use tax records to help determine where people are counted.**

- The proposal would make tax records, such as tax returns and W-2 forms, part of determining a person's "usual residence" for the census.
- Tax records do not always reflect where someone currently lives. People may move, use a different mailing address, or have records that are outdated or incomplete. Relying on these records to help determine residence could result in some people being counted in the wrong place, affecting the accuracy of local population data used for representation, planning, and resources.



# BREAKDOWN:

## PROPOSED RULE:

## Why it matters:

**Redefine “usual residence” based on where a person spends the most time during a new three-month “enumeration period.”**

- This would change how the Census Bureau determines where a person usually lives, using a three-month period from January 3 through April 1 rather than focusing on residence as of Census Day (April 1).
- For people who move, live seasonally in different places, or spend part of the year elsewhere, this could result in them being counted somewhere other than where they live most of the time.

**That could affect the accuracy of local population counts used for representation, planning, and the adequate distribution of resources.**

**Prohibits sexual orientation questions on the decennial census questionnaire.**

- The decennial census does not currently ask about sexual orientation. This rule would prevent the Census Bureau from adding such a question in the future, leaving important gaps in data about LGBTQ communities and making it harder to understand disparities and community needs.

**Maintains “prison gerrymandering” by shifting population counts away from incarcerated people’s home communities.**

- The rule would continue counting incarcerated people at the correctional or detention facility where they are confined rather than at their home address.
- When these census counts are used for redistricting, districts with prisons receive population credit for people who often have stronger ties to communities elsewhere.
- This practice, often called “**prison gerrymandering**,” can increase the representation of districts containing prisons while reducing the representation of the communities incarcerated people come from.

## Take Action!

- [Submit a public comment by October 13, 2026](#). Tell the Census Bureau how the proposed changes could affect your community and urge the Bureau not to adopt them. Use our [template](#) and [talking points](#) as resources for developing your letter.
- **Call for more time to respond.** Submit or sign on to a letter asking the Census Bureau to extend the public comment period through December 10. Use our [letter](#) as an example, and submit comments on [reginfo.gov](#)
- **Spread the word.** Share the proposed changes, comment deadline, and available resources with your networks and encourage others to submit comments. Use the messaging on [Hands Off Our Census](#) and [wearethedatacomms.us](#)