



National Federation of Democratic Women Resolution #3

On the Danger of Undercounting the 2020 Census

WHEREAS, it cannot be overstated that as a constitutionally mandated and protected act, the Decennial Census ought to be carried out with the utmost importance, diligence and accuracy, especially for black and brown populations where the Census historically has been and now could potentially be used as a political weapon to further disenfranchise communities. The Census count is used by federal and state governments to determine the more than \$800 billion in the allocation of funds, programs, and the number of representatives each state sends to Congress. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. At first glance, the U.S. Census may not appear to be a high-caliber issue, but it is a critical tool for democracy. When the census negligibly undercounts minorities and people of color, it in turn strips them of potential funding, resources and even their votes. The weaponization of the census is another way that politicians have manipulated elections for partisan gain as undercounts translate into diluted votes and lack of representation in Congress. The systematic undercounting of the census will lead to gerrymandering, political maneuvering and deletion of polling places, and other forms of voter suppression; and

WHEREAS, undercounting occurs frequently in urban settings where living arrangements are often improvised and unconventional. Garages are often turned into apartment studios, and attics and lofts turned to living quarters occupied by multiple households—sometimes legally. Housing units occupied by two or three families may be erroneously counted as one household. Coupled with fear of fines or retribution from their jurisdiction, families might inadvertently deprive their city, and to an extent themselves, of the opportunity to accurately count the number households, directly impacting funding for schools, health facilities and affordable housing units; and

WHEREAS, another major hurdle facing urban dwellers and people of color pertains to those serving in the military. The Census Bureau announced that for the 2020 Census, it would start counting troops stationed overseas as residing on their U.S. military base

rather than at their permanent home address. Doing so would not only underrepresent the minority military population, but also most likely erroneously redraw congressional lines and districts. Conservative states, which tend to have a more rural topography and house more military bases, would get a population boost, which in turn would give them more delegations to the House of Representatives. In contrast, states such as New York and California, which are already on the verge of losing seats, would suffer the brunt of the loss.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the National Federation of Democratic Women (NFDW) supports and strongly advocates promotion of a fair and accurate count of the U.S. Census which prioritizes inclusion of African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and other minorities, particularly in rural and urban communities. The Congress is urged to take a more vigilant stance to serve as a counterweight to the current administration by promoting an accurate and inclusive Census at the state and local levels and to assure that underserved communities are not undercounted. The National Federation of Democratic Women urges Congress to provide vigorous state campaigns to promote, inform and engage their constituents to participate in the 2020 Census. We cannot allow any communities to be undervalued, undercounted, or underfunded.

Submitted March 2020 by Hazel Thomas and the NFDW Legislative Committee

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