

Apportionment News Conference Remarks

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

This is a historic moment that happens once every 10 years, and it is my honor to represent all of the hard-working staff at the U.S. Census Bureau who spent countless hours to ensure everyone was counted, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. I also want to thank everyone who responded to the census during these extraordinary times.

When the first census was being conducted in 1790, Congress expected about 2 million people would be living in the country. When the results came back in 1793, the population exceeded 3.9 million and overnight, the number of congressional representatives grew by 40.

This number was so much larger than anticipated that they had to add on to Independence Hall to house all the new lawmakers.

The first census was a critical step that helped build the foundation of our democracy. And as we've learned over the years, it continues to be a cornerstone for our growing nation. Through wars, times of great social and technological change, and during a global pandemic, our nation has taken the census every 10 years as directed by our Constitution.

A census is a massive operation that takes years to plan, and it takes a community to see it come to fruition. In addition to our dedicated staff, we had the support of the hundreds of thousands of national and local partners. And, of course, we had the help of our respondents who spent a few minutes completing the 2020 Census form.

The count began in January of 2020 in the small Alaskan village of Toksook Bay. It was there we counted the first person in the 2020 Census.

On March 12, 2020, invitations to respond to the census began to arrive in mailboxes across the country. Less than a week later, states across the nation began to impose stay at home orders.

Immediately, we knew we needed to adapt. We adapted our operations to protect the health and safety of our staff and the public. We adapted our schedule to ensure we could deliver high-quality statistics. And later, we adapted due to natural disasters including hurricanes and wildfires.

Through all of this, we remained flexible, practical and persistent so we could fully conduct the 2020 Census count.

We were especially pleased to see how two thirds of the nation completed the census on their own.

Trying to reach as many people as possible, we extended our communications campaign and quickly developed new ads reflecting life during the pandemic. We advertised on pizza boxes instead of during basketball games. Our partners joined us in reaching people at food banks and school cafeterias instead of promoting the census at county fairs. We quickly expanded from 13 non-English languages to 46 languages to assist in reaching additional historically undercounted populations.

We mailed additional reminders to respond, we emailed households in low-responding areas and we worked with colleges and universities directly to ensure their students were counted in the right place. We worked hard to get more people to respond, especially those in historically undercounted areas.

Census takers have a hard job to begin with, and trying to count people during a global pandemic made it even more challenging. But in order to count the remaining households that did not respond on their own, our census takers went out to those addresses, equipped with masks and iPhones and collected responses directly from household members or from knowledgeable neighbors.

In some cases, when we couldn't get a response in any of these ways, we were able to use information households already provided the government such as through past census responses, tax returns or other government records.

As we move into the results, I want to note that we appreciate the public's patience as we took the appropriate amount of time to ensure the accuracy and quality of the count. So, with that, let's get to the results you've all been waiting for.

The 2020 Census took a snapshot of all people living in the United States on April 1, 2020. And the results are in.

According to the 2020 Census, the number of people living in the United States was 331,449,281.

This represents an increase of 7.4% over the official population count from the 2010 Census. This population growth rate is lower than the previous growth rate of 9.7% between the 2000 and 2010 censuses. In fact, the growth rate from 2010 to 2020 is the second slowest in U.S. history. The country's 7.4% increase in population this decade is only slightly more than the 7.3% increase between 1930 and 1940.

For the regions, the South grew the fastest over the last decade with a 10.2% increase in population, followed by the West with 9.2%, the Northeast with 4.1%, and the Midwest with 3.1%. The Northeast grew faster this decade than it grew between 2000 and 2010, while the other three regions grew slower this decade than the last.

When looking across the states, we see a large variation in population sizes. The state with the largest 2020 Census resident population was California, with 39,538,223. And the state with the smallest population was Wyoming, with 576,851.

However, the 10 most populous states each had a resident population between 10 million and 40 million, while the 10 least populous states each had a resident population between half a million and 1.4 million.

The population of most states grew between 2010 and 2020. Utah was the fastest-growing state, with an 18.4% increase in population, growing to 3.3 million in 2020. On the other hand, 3 states lost population, with West Virginia having the largest rate of decrease at 3.2%.

The population of the District of Columbia grew by 14.6%. Puerto Rico's population decreased by 11.8% to 3.3 million.

Now let's get to the apportionment results from the 2020 Census.

The constitutional purpose of the census is congressional apportionment, which is the process of distributing the memberships, or seats, in the U.S. House of Representatives among the states every 10 years in a way that is proportional to each state's population. Since 1941, the law has specified that the method of equal proportions will be used to assign House seats to the states.

And while the law does not require the Census Bureau to calculate the number of seats each state will get, we do it as a courtesy to the president.

We applied the required method to the apportionment population of the 50 states, not including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico because they have no voting seats in congress. The 2020 Census apportionment population includes the number of people living in the 50 states plus the overseas population, which is a count of federal employees living overseas and their dependents living with them who were allocated to a home state.

Since 1940, the regional trend with apportionment has been an increase in the number of congressional seats for the South and West, and a loss of congressional seats for the Northeast and Midwest. More specifically, since 1940, there's been a combined net shift of 84 seats to the South and West regions.

Overall, the effect of the official 2020 Census population counts on congressional apportionment is a shift of 7 seats among 13 different states, which is the smallest number of seats shifting among states for any decade since the current method of calculating apportionment was adopted in 1941.

6 states will gain seats in the House of Representatives. Texas will gain 2 seats. And Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina, and Oregon will each gain one seat.

7 states will each lose one seat in the House: California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

The number of seats for the remaining 37 states will not change.

The states that will have the most representatives in congress are: California with 52 seats, Texas with 38 seats, Florida with 28 seats, and New York with 26 seats. Those four states are the most populous in the U.S., with each having more than 20 million people. And together those states will hold about a third of the total seats in the House of Representatives.

Also, each of the 6 least populous states have less than 1 million people and will have only one seat.

After the first apportionment occurred based on the 1790 Census, each member of the House represented roughly 34,000 people. Now, the average population size of each House district based on the 2020 Census will be 761,169 people, which is an increase of 50,402 people per representative when compared with the average of 710,767 people per representative based on the 2010 Census.

And those were the first results of the 2020 Census.

We have taken the time we needed to produce the high-quality statistics that we and the public expect.

While no census is perfect, we are confident that today's 2020 Census results meet our high data quality standards. We would not be releasing them to you otherwise.

The Census Bureau is committed to sharing what we know when we know it, to help the nation understand the quality of the 2020 Census results.

Despite all the challenges of the pandemic, the completeness and accuracy of these first 2020 Census results are comparable with recent censuses.

We had numerous quality checks built into collecting the data, and we have conducted one of the most comprehensive reviews in recent census history during data processing.

Later today, we will release the next set of operational quality metrics and additional quality indicators.

This afternoon's release will be unprecedented in how soon after the census we're able to provide operational metrics, down to the state level.

They are just one of the many ways we evaluate and assess the quality of the 2020 Census. While our assessments won't change the results of the 2020 Census, they will inform and influence our planning for the next census.

We are also looking forward to sharing more 2020 Census population results with you later this year, including redistricting data, statistics on age, sex, race and ethnicity, and details about the center of population. The results for the U.S. Island Areas will also be provided in a separate release at a later date.

States, as well as the public, will receive the data they need to begin redistricting by August 16. The Census Bureau will also deliver the final redistricting data tool kit to all states and the public by September 30. COVID-19-related delays and prioritizing the delivery of these apportionment results today delayed our original plan.

Different from previous censuses, the Census Bureau will deliver the data for all states at once, instead of on a flow basis.

Finally, I want to take a moment to again thank our tireless, hard-working staff for everything they have done to ensure the delivery of today's data and future data releases from the 2020 Census. And, I want to thank the millions of people who completed the 2020 Census on their own or provided information to our census takers. Thank you.