

## Census 2020\_ B1C's Position

After consulting with CT-AILA and following their internal deliberations on the issue of the pros and cons regarding the participation of undocumented immigrants on the 2020 Census, B1C's stance is that everyone should complete the forms --including those who are undocumented. We believe the potential for local communities to miss out on the benefits of a truly accurate census outweighs any risks of coming forward.

Below are some of the main reasons CT-AILA shared on their decision:

- **It is the law that all people living in the US must respond to census questionnaires regardless of immigration status.** Just as our clients file taxes on US income, and get driver's licenses even though they might not have the proper immigration status they should also comply with this requirement.
- **A true count of all individuals is important to future policies, funding to local programs that our communities need, and to decisions for new federal policies and even immigration reform for the next 10 years.** In fact, at our last lobbying session with our Congressional Reps in D.C. in April of 2019 one of the congressional aides urged us to help make sure immigrants of all status were counted in the census to help support reform efforts.
- **While there is evidence that DHS plans to share immigration information with the Census, it is clear that information will not be and cannot be shared in the opposite direction – from Census to DHS.** Therefore, filling out a census form does not create more risk or exposure to individuals than they are already subject to on a daily basis.
- **Much like the calculation we made when considering DACA when it was first opened, the benefits of coming forward outweigh the known risks.** In fact, completing the census in our view is much less risky.

The recently published blog by Attorney Doug Penn, a former CT-AILA President, captures B1C's position on the 2020 Census, and as such we will develop a time line and talking points to address the importance of participating on the Census, and intend to widely use the phrase:

*Everyone counts, so everyone should be counted.*

## WHO COUNTS? YOU DO.

The 2020 Census is upon us. Ever since the administration threatened to put the citizenship question on the census, the overriding questions facing the immigrant community have been, “Is it safe to respond?” and “Should I even respond?” **Immigrants, especially immigrants who are unlawfully present in the United States or who have family in the United States who are unlawfully present are afraid that the census information will be used against them.**

**This fear is understandable. This fear is reasonable. This administration counts on this fear.** Even after it was decided to not put the citizenship question on the census, there have been additional public announcements that Department of Homeland Security will share information with the Department of Commerce, which manages the census process. The President has tweeted that there are other ways of getting and sharing citizenship information. **This fear needs to be conquered.**

The scary truth is that we live in a surveillance society. All of us, whether citizen or not, are under near constant surveillance. Traffic cameras are on streetlights. Private citizens add to the video surveillance with Ring and other ‘smart doorbells.’ Scanners can triangulate the location of cell phones even when the owner is not actively using the cell phone. **The Department of Homeland Security uses information obtained when someone enters the United States to track them years later. Responding to the census does not increase the odds of that you will be found or tracked.**

*Everyone counts, so everyone should be counted.*

Why should anyone complete the census? First, it is the law. Just as it is required to pay taxes on income in the United States, even if you are not authorized to work, or have a driver’s license to drive a car, you are required to respond to the census. The Constitution requires the United States government to do a complete count of every person in the United States every ten years. This is not “every citizen,” nor “every adult,” nor “every man”, nor “every voter.” The census counts every person in the United States.

Second, this is how the federal government and the state governments determine what communities need. Your family and your community depend on this funding.

Funding for schools, for hospitals, and for roads are all evaluated based on information collected from the census. Governments evaluate what services to offer based on census information. Staffing decisions and needs assessments are made by analyzing census information.

Third, political power is distributed based on the census. Districts are drawn based on census information. The census determines how many United States representatives each state gets in the Congress. Electoral college votes are allocated by the census. The census determines strength of the state’s voice in the federal government.

Who counts? You do. Stand up and be counted By [attorneypenn](#) | Published January 31, 2020 | Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Comments Off on Who Counts? You do.