

Resolution No. 681-2020

By Council Member: Kelley, Bishop, Brancatelli, Cleveland, Conwell, Griffin, Hairston, Johnson, B. Jones, J. Jones, Kazy, McCormack, Mooney, Polensek, Santana, Slife and Zone

An emergency resolution strongly opposing the federal government’s attempt to rush the 2020 Census count; demanding that the federal government return to the revised extended schedule to ensure an accurate count; and urging the Jackson administration to sign onto the California lawsuit challenging the decision to shorten the timeframe for completing the census.

WHEREAS, the United States decennial census as mandated by the Constitution is happening now; and

WHEREAS, in April 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic was in its early stages, the Census Bureau asked Congress for permission to revise its schedule in order to maintain the health and safety of census workers and the public while ensuring a fair and accurate count of people in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the revised schedule would have had field data collection ending on October 31, 2020, instead of July 31, 2020; the apportionment delivery to the President would have occurred by April 30, 2021, instead of by December 31, 2020; and redistricting counts would have gone to the states by July 31, 2021, instead of by April 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS, House Democrats have approved the revised schedule as part of a coronavirus relief bill, but the Republican-controlled Senate has not done so; and

WHEREAS, earlier in August, the Census Bureau determined that field data collection would be completed by September 30, 2020, and committed to delivering the counts to the President by December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, already hampered by the coronavirus pandemic, a shortened schedule for counting has exacerbated lingering challenges in dealing with health risks, retaining workers and deploying new technology for the 2020 census; and

WHEREAS, moreover, states fear that rushing to complete the 2020 Census will lead to massive undercounts of communities of color and the municipalities, cities, counties, and states where they live; and

WHEREAS, an undercount of Ohio’s and Cleveland’s communities of color will negatively impact the number of seats representing Ohio in the House of Representatives, how the electoral districts are drawn, and how billions of federal dollars are divvied up for programs like food assistance, health care and education; and

WHEREAS, moreover, the President, by Executive Order, has demanded that the Census Bureau exclude non-citizens from the census count; and

WHEREAS, the shortened timeframe to complete the census during the pandemic along with the President's Executive Order illustrates how the Trump administration is working actively to drive down minority participation in the census; and

WHEREAS, local governments and civil rights groups in California have filed a lawsuit in federal district court challenging the Trump administration's decision to shorten the timeframe for completing the census; and

WHEREAS, this Council encourages the Jackson administration and local civil rights groups to sign onto the California lawsuit, as did other local governments including Harris County, Texas, where Houston is located, King County, Washington, which is home to Seattle, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Salinas, California; and

WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety, now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That this Council strongly opposes the federal government's attempt to rush the 2020 Census count; demands that the federal government return to the revised extended schedule to ensure an accurate count; and urges the Jackson administration to sign onto the California lawsuit challenging the decision to shorten the timeframe for completing the census.

Section 2. That the Clerk of Council is directed to transmit copies of this resolution to Dr. Steven Dillingham, Director, U.S. Census Bureau and the Ohio delegation of the U.S. Congress.

Section 3. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.