

Dear Legislator:

As the decennial U.S. Census approaches, we, the undersigned, wish to convey to you the magnitude of obtaining an accurate, complete count throughout our state, and the importance of dedicating state funding for that effort.

Most residents recognize the importance of an accurate Census count in the determination of the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives; how our legislative district boundaries are formed; and how federal funds are distributed for dozens of programs, including Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, school lunches, and Section 8 housing assistance. Many, however, may not consider the additional programs and business practices that are dependent upon Census data:

- **State and local governments** utilize census data for the distribution of sales tax and local, state, and federal transportation funding, for effective highway planning and construction, for drawing maps for representation, and for public safety planning and emergency preparedness
- **Businesses** use census data to decide where to build factories, offices, restaurants and stores and how to effectively market their goods and services, helping to create jobs
- **Manufacturers** use census data to determine needs and quantities for production
- **Developers** use the census to build new homes and new businesses
- **Health care providers** use census data to determine the need for additional hospital services, physicians, urgent care facilities or other types of medical services
- **Banks** use census data to insure compliance with federal mortgage guidelines regarding race and to comply with other regulatory requirements, particularly the Community Reinvestment Act, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, and the Federal Insurance Improvement Act
- **Researchers and advocates** use census data to define and describe the needs of populations, and to profile demographics of blocks, neighborhoods, cities, counties, states and other geographic areas
- **Family history libraries and databases** are critically dependent on accurate, complete census data for research purposes
- **Residents** use the census to support community initiatives involving quality-of-life and consumer advocacy

As you can see, census data is critical to economic development and to the safety and health of Utah residents. An inaccurate census means money lost to our state and services denied, and could hinder Utah's economic growth for the next decade. In 2016, Utah received \$5,694,470,987 in federal funding allocated by using census data. That is about \$1,870 per Utahn. With Utah's high growth rate throughout the state, an accurate 2020 census count is vital. A smart investment guarantees a positive return.

Census 2020 faces multiple challenges. The U.S. Government Accountability Office says the effort is at "high risk" for substantially undercounting certain groups, including low-income, underserved, and minority households. And, for the first time, the census will be administered online. Many households in both rural and urban communities do not have online access, creating even greater challenges for many residents to complete the census. We know these challenges require local solutions. Funding for local complete count committees provides support to local governments and nonprofit organizations – trusted agents who know how to reach residents in their own communities.

In recognition of Census 2020's critical importance to all facets of our community, and recognizing the many challenges to gathering accurate data, we support funding for thoughtful, collaborative outreach efforts to address the barriers and ensure a complete count for Utah.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Utah Transit Authority Board of Trustees

Derek Miller – President & CEO

Salt Lake Chamber

Utah League of Cities and Towns

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