

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
“2020 Census: Conducting a Secure and Accurate Count”**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS
JULY 16, 2019
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The 2020 Census will serve as a roadmap for the next decade, determining how billions of dollars in federal resources and Congressional representation will be divided among the states.

The results of this count will impact every community in America. And every person must be counted.

An accurate count isn't just about understanding how many people live in our country. This is about ensuring that communities across America have access to the resources they need to grow and succeed.

Public health officials use census data to direct resources to combatting the opioid crisis and other health emergencies. First responders and disaster relief agencies use this data to determine where they should direct emergency response efforts. Local businesses use census data to help decide where to invest in new factories and stores.

In my home state of Michigan, \$29 billion in annual federal funding is on the line. For every person not counted, Michigan stands to lose as much as \$1,800, funds that could be invested in health care, infrastructure upgrades, or public education.

That's why it is extremely important that we get the most thorough and accurate count possible.

It has taken the Bureau ten years of careful planning and preparation to make this census successful. But there is still more work to be done.

The census begins in January 2020, in remote Alaska, and in March everywhere else. Between now and then, the Bureau has to finalize its communications campaign, conduct robust community outreach, finish hiring trusted local staff, and perform final testing for dozens of crucial IT systems.

As outlined in our Constitution, the purpose of the census is to count every person in our country. But given the chaos and confusion the Administration has generated as a result of their effort to include an untested citizenship question, the Bureau has significant work to do to restore public trust in the census and ensure response rates do not decline as a result.

We need to make sure that everyone is able to respond to the census, through the new online form or in whatever way they can, including people without good internet access, people in minority communities, in rural areas, and on reservations.

From fair representation in Congress to the effective use of taxpayer dollars, each and every American has a personal stake in the 2020 Census. I look forward to working with you to make sure that the count is accurate, cost-effective, and on-schedule.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.