

<Letterhead>

January 26, 2012

<Insert Name>

Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington DC 2030

<Insert Name>

Director, U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road
Suitland, MD 20746

Dear Secretary **XX** and Director **XXX**,

As the independent and bipartisan commission tasked with re-drawing the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts of the largest state in the United States, we recognize the crucial importance of a fair and accurate Census. We write to express our concerns regarding two important issues—the Bureau’s use of differential privacy as its statistical method for protecting individual data and general quality concerns resulting from a Census conducted during a pandemic with changing timetables.

While Census delays present serious hurdles for the work of California’s Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC), we nevertheless urge the Bureau to take the time necessary to verify the data that has been collected and to provide an accurate count of the population for reapportionment and redistricting. The CRC is constrained by state constitutional and statutory requirements, which require a full and accurate count of all of California’s residents. Relying on potentially inaccurate and incomplete data to guide the reapportionment and redistricting processes could result in costly legal challenges.

We are also concerned that the Bureau’s use of new differential privacy standards will further impact the quality of the Census data, which the CRC will utilize to draw new legislative districts. While we take seriously peoples’ rights to privacy, we are concerned that this new methodology, which was only introduced in 2018, could further diminish the reliability of the data. We ask that you remove the differential privacy algorithm and provide states with total population at the block level to ensure we have complete and accurate data.

An accurate count of the population serves as the basis for fair political representation. Ensuring an accurate count of the people is a challenging yet crucial endeavor. The effort has been further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has limited the outreach and communication efforts in hard-to-reach communities, including people of color, rural communities, low-income families, people experiencing homelessness, and immigrant families.

California law requires all residents be counted for redistricting purposes. We recognize that this may delay our own deadlines for redistricting and may make our own jobs more difficult, but we strongly believe that this is the best option for upholding the confidence and fidelity of the entire process.

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission is one of the few independent and bipartisan commissions in the United States tasked with redistricting. Our fourteen member panel is

comprised of five Republicans, five Democrats and four non-party affiliates. Together, we ask that you support our bipartisan efforts by ensuring a fair and accurate dataset.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Commission Chair Derric Taylor (Republican)

On behalf of:

Isra Ahmed (No party affiliation)

Linda Akutagawa (No party affiliation)

Jane Andersen (Republican)

Alicia Fernandez (Republican)

Neal Forniciari (Republican)

Dr. J. Ray Kennedy (Democrat)

Antonio Le Mons (No party affiliation)

Dr. Sara Sadhwani (Democrat)

Patricia Sinay (Democrat)

Pedro Toledo (No party affiliation)

Trena Turner (Democrat)

Angela Vazquez (Democrat)

Russell Yee (Republican)

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