



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 18, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

As you are already keenly aware, within the past week the novel coronavirus COVID-19 has begun to have an impact on operations of all kinds across the United States. In Pennsylvania, my administration is working diligently to ensure the safety and well-being of our commonwealth's 12.8 million residents. Part of that work is encouraging people to know the signs of the illness, practice effective hygiene measures, stay home if they are sick, avoid large gatherings if they can, and practice social distancing. It is very possible that further restrictions will be recommended in the coming days or weeks as COVID-19 spreads.

These recommendations, outlined by the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), will help reduce the spread of coronavirus and keep Pennsylvanians healthy. However, these proactive measures will also likely have a detrimental effect on getting a complete count for Census 2020. Census awareness and get-out-the-count events will be canceled. Many people will likely spend more time in their homes and less time out in the community, making it more difficult for grassroots and community organizations to provide them with Census 2020 information. Further, individuals who are hospitalized or quarantined, acting as caretakers for loved ones, or displaced or lacking access to basic needs will likely be focused on their immediate health and safety needs rather than filling out the 2020 Census form.

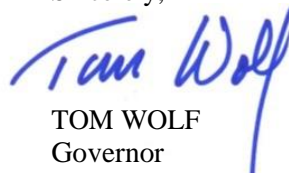
Additionally, as we work to mitigate risk, it is critical that we do not encourage further exposure to the virus. The health practice of social distancing unfortunately runs counter to the Census Bureau's strategy of door-to-door enumeration for non-responders. While the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will adjust its own Census 2020 messaging to further encourage census participation by mail, phone, or online, the door-to-door follow-up from Census Bureau enumerators will likely be less effective due to precautionary social distancing of Pennsylvania residents.

For those reasons, I urge the U.S. Census Bureau to consider extending the deadline for Census submission beyond July 31 to ensure that Pennsylvanians—and people in every state across the country—are able to be counted properly.

Over the past few months, my administration has reiterated to Pennsylvanians the importance of being counted in this Census 2020. Approximately \$27 billion in annual federal funding to the commonwealth depends on it. In January, we launched a statewide awareness campaign and began assisting efforts in local communities to ensure that everyone is counted. Closing the deadline submission on July 31 would likely hinder those efforts.

In Pennsylvania, we want to ensure that everyone stays healthy and is counted in Census 2020. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this most serious matter.

Sincerely,



TOM WOLF
Governor

CC: Dr. Steven Dillingham, Director, United States Census Bureau