

# Census Black Roundtable

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

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## OPENING REMARKS

- Hello, everyone. I'm Robert Santos, director of the U.S. Census Bureau. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.
- The Census Black Roundtable and its member organizations have been valuable, long-time partners to the Census Bureau.
- In the lead-up to 2020 and during the last census, many organizations on this call played key roles in ensuring an accurate count of Black communities and in addressing issues affecting historically undercounted populations.
- In fact, without your support and the support from all our partners and stakeholders, we couldn't have achieved the measure of success we attained. We recognize and deeply appreciate that.
- That's part of the reason I'm so pleased to speak with you today—not only to thank you for helping during an enormously challenging period, but to continue and strengthen a sustaining, continuous partnership of mutual benefit.
- And that brings me to the 2030 Census. I'll start with our collective vision: to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.
- In 2020, we undercounted the Black and Hispanic populations, American Indian and Alaska Native populations on tribal lands, children, and others.
- We also know that we overcounted the White population.
- Real improvements to census results can only come from better enumerations among the historically undercounted.
- And that's best accomplished by increasing participation in the census. But how do we do that?
- Well, we know that trust in the Census Bureau was a big issue in 2020. In fact, we're still experiencing participation challenges in our current surveys.
- We also know that when trusted messengers are communicators, communities listen.
- That's why external engagement has been a high priority for the Census Bureau since my term began 3 years ago.
- To illustrate, over the past 3 years, I—accompanied by Census Bureau staff—have completed 166 community engagement trips across 30 states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
- On these travels, I've conducted over 550 community conversations with the public. I've engaged with stakeholders and elected officials in public and private meetings.
- We've focused on historically undercounted populations and their communities, including the Black population. For example:
  - I've conducted numerous ethnic media interviews and a Black radio podcast.
  - I've met with local pastors and Black community leaders.
  - I've made presentations at almost a dozen historically black colleges and universities.

- We've met with organizations like the National Business League, the National Urban League and its local chapters, and Black sororities like Delta Sigma Theta.
- I've met with members of Congress in their districts, including Rep. Alma Adams of North Carolina and the staff of Rep. Maxwell Frost of Florida.
- Our engagement efforts are creating a lasting, trusted messenger ecosystem in communities that have been hardest to count.
- We need to involve partners like you in the development, implementation, and execution of our plans.
- We both want the rich diversity of America to be better reflected in the statistics we produce. And we look forward to working together to make that happen.
- Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.