



August 5, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators McConnell and Schumer:

As the association of local governments in the metropolitan Washington region, we write today to urge you to include language in the next Senate COVID-19 relief package (HEALS Act) to extend the statutory reporting deadlines for the 2020 Census by four months—in line with the Census Bureau’s recommendation—and provide adequate funding to address continued 2020 Census challenges brought about by the pandemic.

The administration’s new proposal to rush major census operations will throw the complex census contingency plan into turmoil and result in incomplete data that will undermine the ability of Congress and state leaders to wisely and effectively allocate trillions of dollars for vital services and infrastructure improvements over the next decade. We must give all communities and census workers the time needed to produce an accurate and complete count.

The stakes could not be higher. If remaining census operations are not done well, it will likely lead to our region’s most marginalized communities being grossly undercounted. The census has historically undercounted people of color, immigrants, young children, low-income, and rural households. To advance racial equity in our region, we must reach and support these communities.

A decision of this magnitude must not be politically motivated. We must do everything we can to ensure that the decennial census is conducted in an impartial, exact manner. Likewise, Congress has a constitutional responsibility to ensure an accurate census. The House of Representatives has already approved an extension of the 2020 Census operations as part of its most recent COVID-19 relief package. Accordingly, we strongly urge the Senate to agree to a Census extension provision in its next COVID-19 relief package (HEALS Act), so that the Census Bureau is not forced to rush remaining enumeration operations and critical data review, processing, and tabulation activities.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for supporting the fair, complete, and accurate 2020 Census the Constitution requires. If you have any questions, please reach out to COG’s Executive Director Chuck Bean at [cbean@mwkog.org](mailto:cbean@mwkog.org) or (202)962-3260.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Derrick L. Davis in black ink.

Derrick L. Davis  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Prince George’s County

Handwritten signature of Christian Dorsey in black ink.

Christian Dorsey  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors  
Arlington County

Handwritten signature of Robert C. White, Jr. in blue ink.

Robert C. White, Jr.  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors  
District of Columbia