

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Criticizes Trump administration's maneuvers to manipulate Census and hamper accurate count

Posted on Friday, Aug 7, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - With the U.S. Census Bureau already struggling to administer the 2020 Census amid the pandemic, the Trump administration this week announced that it will cut Census data collection operations short by one month. U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and her colleagues, led by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), say cutting the count short by a month will be devastating to the accuracy of the 2020 Census and disproportionately impact hard-to-count communities. The Senators penned a letter to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross urging the Trump administration to reverse the effort to end the count a month early.

The once a decade count, which is mandated by the Constitution, helps set federal funding levels that affect everything from schools, roads, and hospitals to representation in Congress. Due to the challenges associated with the pandemic, officials rightfully extended the deadline for conducting the count to October 31. However, in an illogical and seemingly political decision, abruptly decided this week to end the count earlier despite COVID cases spiking in communities across the country.

As a result of the new September 30 deadline, there are only 56 days left for Census door knockers to go door-to-door to collect responses from 37 percent of the country who didn't self-respond. These efforts are complicated due to the prevalence of COVID-19 and mistrust in many communities due to a number of

actions by the Trump administration, including those ruled illegal by the U.S. Supreme Court.

*“We urge you to immediately reverse this decision and take all necessary steps to ensure a full, fair, and accurate Decennial Census,”* **the Senators wrote.**

In addition to Baldwin and Reed, the letter was signed by Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Patty Murray (D-WA), Cory A. Booker (D-NJ), Angus S. King, Jr. (I-ME), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) Tina Smith (D-MN), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Tom Carper (D-DE), and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).

*“This appears to be yet another effort to sabotage a successful Census, which include the Administration’s earlier attempts to add an unnecessary and divisive citizenship question and the recent issuance of a memorandum seeking to exclude undocumented immigrants for apportionment purposes. Ending operations early, especially Nonresponse Follow Up, will disproportionately disadvantage hard-to-count communities,”* **the Senators noted.**

*“A full accounting of everyone present in the United States is required by the Constitution and is critical to the allocation of trillions of dollars of federal funding and proper Congressional apportionment. Data derived from the Decennial Census influences decisions made across all levels of government and by businesses of all sizes. Rushing the completion of the Census, distorting response rates, and short-circuiting data assurance activities will have disastrous consequences that will reverberate for years to come,”* **the letter continues.**

Full text of the letter is below. An online version of this release is available [here](#).

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write to express our deep concern and opposition to the Administration's decision to end Census field data collection activities by September 30 - one month earlier than previously planned. This self-imposed curtailment of operations will have a devastating impact on the accuracy and completeness of the Decennial Census.

The Decennial Census has faced unique challenges due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). With field operations delayed and reduced significantly in order to help ensure the safety of respondents and Census employees, ending operations early will make an accurate and complete count impossible.

This appears to be yet another effort to sabotage a successful Census, which include the Administration's earlier attempts to add an unnecessary and divisive citizenship question and the recent issuance of a memorandum seeking to exclude undocumented immigrants for apportionment purposes. Ending operations early, especially Nonresponse Follow Up, will disproportionately disadvantage hard-to-count communities.

A full accounting of everyone present in the United States is required by the Constitution and is critical to the allocation of trillions of dollars of federal funding and proper Congressional apportionment. Data derived from the Decennial Census influences decisions made across all levels of government and by businesses of all sizes. Rushing the completion of the Census, distorting response rates, and short-circuiting data assurance activities will have disastrous consequences that will reverberate for years to come.

As such, we urge you to immediately reverse this decision and take all necessary steps to ensure a full, fair, and accurate Decennial Census.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.