



American Statistical Association Statement on Creation and Appointment of US Census Bureau Deputy Director of Data

September 1, 2020

The August 17 [addition of a deputy director of data at the US Census Bureau](#) by the Trump administration seriously undermines the Census Bureau’s structure, culture, standards, and practices that exist to yield the highest quality data. The bureau states that the new position will ensure “the 2020 Census data products are of the highest quality.” In fact, the administration is adding—in the final, critical stages of the decennial census—redundant bureaucracy to the many effective and well-honed protections and protocols already in place.

Because of the vital role of the decennial census in our country’s democracy, governance, commerce, and everyday life—along with our association’s 180 years of support for the census—the American Statistical Association (ASA) argues strongly against this and other recent developments. This appointment is not consistent with upholding principles and ethics of data integrity, ensuring a fair and accurate decennial census, and avoiding disruption of the Census Bureau’s important ongoing work. Consistent with our past exhortations, listed below, we urge the removal of the superfluous position of “Deputy Director for Data” so the Census Bureau may continue its work without disruptive interference.

The members of the professional career staff of the US Census Bureau are committed and highly competent civil servants who have been working for much of the past decade to ensure the 2020 decennial census is fair and accurate. Our association urges this administration to allow the US Census Bureau career professionals to continue their job: conduct a fair and impartial census, and thereby maintain their proud tradition of scientific integrity in data collection and use.

Recent ASA statements and calls regarding the 2020 decennial census and US Census Bureau:

- [Granting the US Census Bureau’s spring request](#) for a [120-day extension](#) of the legal deadline for delivering decennial census data to the president and states in consideration of necessary adjustments due to COVID-19, regardless of the fact that the bureau has since rescinded the request

- [Restoring the data-collection timeline](#) put in place by the bureau following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, namely October 31, 2020, for the field data collection and self-response options
- [Nullifying President Trump's July 21 memorandum](#) to omit undocumented immigrants from the counts in the decennial census used for apportionment
- [Removing the June 23 political appointees](#)
- [Transferring assembly of administrative records](#) to collect citizenship information to a nonstatistical agency