



June 22, 2021

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

We write to you in regard to a matter of utmost importance: the 2020 Census. While we recognize the difficulties associated with completing a decennial census amid a pandemic, the ongoing delay in the release of 2020 Census redistricting data places our states in a nearly impossible situation to redraw lines prior to the 2022 election cycle. Consequently, we urge you to release redistricting data this month or as soon as possible prior to the delayed release date of September 30, 2021, and the release of the “legacy format” data on August 16, 2021.

Over the course of the past year, states and commonwealths played an integral part in ensuring the 2020 Census achieved a complete and accurate count of persons living in the United States on April 1, 2020. States and commonwealths have worked in conjunction with the U.S. Census Bureau (the Bureau) to inform Americans of the importance of the 2020 Census and encourage them to complete their questionnaires. In addition, our state and local complete count committees walked alongside the Bureau to ensure local communities were engaged, and while the COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of many planned events, our complete count committees adjusted and leveraged their online presence to achieve a complete count.

States aided the Bureau within the Bureau’s fluctuating timelines for self-response and non-response follow-up (NERFU) in good faith. Yet, we are now facing a nearly half-year delay beyond the statutory deadline for receiving redistricting data. This delay places an unreasonable burden on our states and undermines public trust in the foundations of our democratic republic.

As you know, the U.S. Constitution and state constitutions task state governments with redistricting their respective congressional and legislative districts in the year immediately following the decennial census. To do so, states have historically received apportionment data in December of the year of the census and redistricting data in February or March of the following year—two to three months later, allowing states time to perform redistricting work in the spring and summer consistent with various state constitutional and statutory deadlines.

As a departure from the traditional timeline, the Bureau released 2020 apportionment data in April 2021, nearly four months behind schedule, which should result in the delivery of 2020 redistricting data by June or July of this year. However, it is our understanding that the Bureau will not release redistricting data until on or about September 30, 2021, with a potential release of legacy data sometime in mid-to-late August

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2021. The extended timeline represents a six-to-seven-month delay of redistricting data and is nearly double the conventional length of time between releasing both data sets.

Based on affidavits filed in federal court by the Bureau, it appears that nearly all of the data processing necessary for the public release of the redistricting data will be complete by June 24, 2021. Further delaying the release of redistricting data negatively impacts redistricting efforts nationwide, places state governments in an unnecessarily precarious position, and presents compounding delays in operations at every level of government.

Districts for the U.S. House of Representatives cannot be drawn until the data has been released. Districts for state legislatures also cannot be drawn until this data has been released. Districts for county, parish, township, and municipal governing bodies cannot be drawn until states have had the opportunity to draw congressional and state legislative districts. Lastly, districts for school district seats cannot be drawn until county, parish, township, and municipal governing bodies have had the opportunity to draw their own respective districts.

As a result of such negative impacts to our constitutional responsibilities, we seek the release of redistricting data as soon as possible—and in line with traditional timelines—so that states may begin to perform important redistricting tasks on behalf of our constituents.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued service to our great nation.

Sincerely,



Governor Asa Hutchinson
State of Arkansas



Governor Kay Ivey
State of Alabama



Governor Doug Ducey
State of Arizona



Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida



Governor Brian Kemp
State of Georgia



Governor Kim Reynolds
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Governor Greg Gianforte
State of Montana



Governor Pete Ricketts
State of Nebraska



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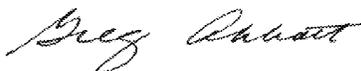
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