

NEWS ALERT

For Immediate Release

February 6, 2019



Contact information provided on last page.

Lawmakers & Advocates to Cuomo: Where is the Census Funding Report Due in January?

Senators Question Why 2018 Law Establishing NYS Complete Count Commission Was Never Created and Status of Missing Report on Funding Recommendations

New York is Projected to be the Only State to Lose 2 Congressional Seats

ALBANY, NEW YORK (2/6/2019) – Today, members of the New York State Senate Majority and advocates called into question why Governor Cuomo failed to convene the 2020 Census Complete Count Commission required by legislation he signed into law in March of 2018, and want to know the status of a report that it mandated with recommendations on state funding to ensure a proper 2020 Census count.

According to Senator Julia Salazar, Chair of the Senate Women’s Issues Committee, “A huge undercount of New Yorkers in the 2010 Census led to our State losing two congressional seats and a loss of over \$1.5 billion annually in federal aid. The continued loss of federal-level clout by New York and the loss of tens of billions of dollars in federal aid at a time when some of our biggest cities are on the list of the poorest in the nation is unacceptable and a mistake that cannot be repeated.”

“The law is very clear. The 2018-2019 adopted State budget required the Governor to name a commission that would begin the process of laying out an action plan to ensure a complete Census count and recommend to the legislature a funding level to accomplish that task,” **declared Senator Jessica Ramos, Chair of the Senate Labor Committee**. She continued, “The report was due January 10, 2019 but we will never see that report because the Governor ignored his responsibilities on this matter. To make things worse, the Governor didn’t allocate a single cent to ensure a proper count in our State in his recently released budget proposal.”

Senator Robert Jackson, Chair of the Senate Committee on Cities, stated, “We have a situation where states around the nation have been spending tens of millions of dollars the past few years to ensure their residents are all counted and the federal government funding tied to population counts is secured for their well-being. However, not here in New York. At a time when black child poverty rates are closing in on 70% in our biggest cities and poverty rates for Asian and Latino children passing the 50% mark, we can ill afford to be penny wise and pound foolish and continue to lose federal funding desperately needed for everything from affordable housing to infrastructure repairs.”

Senator Zellnor Myrie, Chair of the Senate Elections Committee, stated, “Our courts have been very clear that ensuring a complete count is a constitutional requirement that needs our full attention. While states like California,

Florida, North Carolina and others are going to gain seats in Congress, New York is now projected to lose two more and that will happen with just an undercount of less than 20,000 of our residents. Over 600,000 New Yorkers were not counted in the 2010 Census and we have set ourselves up for another epic failure without having our state government put in place the funding to support a plan to ensure a complete count of all our residents.”

“In 2020, more than ever before, we will need to earn the trust of immigrants, Muslims, people of color, young parents, and others who are traditionally undercounted or who are particularly skeptical in this political climate. With a federal administration that seems overtly hostile to many of these groups, there is an urgent need to have trusted voices in the communities to explain why filling out the census is important. The Fiscal Policy Institute estimates that an investment of \$40 million is needed to have a robust outreach by community-based groups in every county of the state. It is an investment that should more than repay itself in political representation and federal funding by reducing the census undercount,” **said David Dyssegaard Kallick, Deputy Director and Director, Immigration Research Initiative at the Fiscal Policy Institute.**

According to Saleen Shah, Director of Communications and Public Affairs at the Citizens Committee for New York City, “The Census determines the number of schools on the ground, hospitals that serve people in a given community, and more.” He added, “It is a quality of life issue.”

“Earlier last week the Governor announced a complete count commission that circumvented the legislative intent and work of the 2018 Law. He has asked the commission to examine billions of points of data in the 2010 Census to pinpoint why there was an undercount,” **said Senator Salazar.** She added, “That data is already available by Senate and Assembly district via work conducted by the CUNY Graduate Center. We had 8 years to review our mistakes with ensuring a complete count in 2010 and we surely do not have more time to waste on a commission that will not add any value to the need to properly fund a complete count in 2020.”

Senator Ramos added, “Without the proper level of funding as requested by our NGO’s and grass roots activists, our State government is deliberately setting up an undercount in our minority, immigrant and rural communities. This cannot stand!”

The Census is part of a process that is used to distribute over \$800,000 billion in federal aid to states and to distribute political power across state lines. **Recent projections show that New York is the only State in the Union that will lose 2 seats in Congress,** joining Illinois, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Alabama in list of state projected to lose seats.

Community leaders and advocates are now calling for \$40 million in funding for complete count effort that must be rolled out very soon. The 2010 Census was used by the feds to currently provide New York with \$53.2 billion annually via federal population-driven funding formulas.

With only months away before the 2020 Census, other states have already been spending millions to ensure a proper count. Arizona has budgeted \$2 million in addition to other funds to count all their residents; California will have spent over \$90 million to ensure they don’t lose any of the \$83 billion they get yearly from the feds; and Georgia, the Carolinas, Maryland, and Minnesota have already spent millions to ensure they will not lose federal funding or loss of political power in Washington.

###

Contact: For Senator Julia Salazar: Guillermo Martinez – 518-455-2177
For Senator Jessica Ramos: Michael Gray – 518-455-2529
For Senator Robert Jackson: Matthew Levy – 518-455-2041
For Senator Zellnor Myrie: Chaka Laguerre – 518-455-2410