The Following Statement Was Issued to the Media By Dr. Gail C. Christopher on the Proposed Overhaul of the 2030 Census

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 30, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Regrettably, the Commerce Department's proposed changes to the 2030 Census counting practices and priorities align with this administration's ongoing attacks on the nation's diversity. The United States of America has always been comprised of a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and religiously diverse population.

Recent proposals to change the census are part of a deliberately cruel and harmful denial of the existence and humanity of diverse population groups. If implemented, the proposed changes will have devastating health consequences for the most vulnerable populations in communities across the country. It is unjust and morally untenable for the government to adopt rules, policies, and practices that turn back the clock and ignore centuries of barriers and inequities to help sustain a hierarchy of human value that favors Whites in our society.

> The census belongs to all of us. It is how America affirms that every person matters. We can't allow it to become a tool for erasing the very people it was meant to count."
>
> *Dr. Gail C. Christopher*

Since its inception in 1790, the United States census count has been our most reliable way of tracking and affirming the essence of our democracy—"We the People." The politicization of this core strength of our democracy is dangerous and can't be tolerated. The people of this nation must voice opposition now by sending in meaningful comments and demanding that the comment period for this proposed rule be extended.

The stakes could not be higher. The administration's proposed rule for the 2030 census is a sweeping effort to redefine who counts in America and to strip away the data and information we need to see, understand, and serve every community. It is bad public policy. It is bad for

America. And it falls hardest on people of color.



Dr. Gail C. Christopher

Every ten years since 1790, our nation has counted its people. Race has appeared on that count in some form every time, alongside basic questions such as age and sex. For more than two centuries, the census has told us who we are, where we live, and how our lives are changing.

At times, that history has been deplorable. Early counts reflected moral failures, including how enslaved people were counted. Yet the country learned to use census data as a tool for progress as it emerged as a key evidence base for civil rights laws, fair voting maps, public health planning, and the fair sharing of federal resources.

The proposed rule would shatter their effectiveness by removing race and ethnicity questions from the census form and any questionnaire used to count the population. It would remove many immigrants from the totals used to calculate political power. It would ban questions on sexual orientation.
Collectively, these changes would dismantle the foundation of how America sees itself.

In particular, the ban on race and ethnicity questions is reprehensible. While the rule claims to limit this ban to the decennial census alone, the framing is misleading. The census is the anchor for nearly every other survey in the country. Federal agencies, states, cities, universities, hospitals, and private researchers all rely on census totals to weight and check their own data. If race and ethnicity are removed from the census, it weakens the reliability of that information everywhere, at every level, in both public and private sectors.

Furthermore, the justification offered raises more questions than it answers. The rule describes race and ethnicity as "immaterial personal characteristics." It points to reduced "response burden" and the risk that personal information could be disclosed. But answering these questions takes seconds. And the disclosure risk is a problem of the Commerce Department's own making.

In June 2026, the department banned the use of modern privacy safeguards that had long protected responses to race and ethnicity. Having stripped away those protections, it now cites the resulting privacy risk as grounds for eliminating the questions. They manufactured a crisis to justify a predetermined outcome. The fix is simple: restore the safeguards.

Moreover, this is an unusually troubling and abrupt process, one that sharply contrasts with historic Census Bureau processes and procedures. The agency normally tests even minor changes with years of research, expert review, and public input. Neither the June rule nor this proposal went through that level of scrutiny. When a government skips its own standards to remove data about communities of color, it certainly appears intentional, particularly when it is consistent with other measures hampering progress for people of color.

As a public health leader, I want to underscore the impact on people's lives.

To understand health risks, researchers need to calculate rates from the raw numbers. For instance, roughly 85,000 Black Americans and 520,000 White Americans died of heart disease in 2023. Viewed alone, those figures might suggest heart disease is mainly a problem for White Americans. But when we divide by each population's size, as reported in the census, the truth emerges. Black Americans die of heart disease at a rate 21 percent higher than White Americans, the highest of any racial group.

Without census race data, we lose that denominator. We lose the ability to compare groups. We lose the ability to know whether conditions are improving or getting worse. The lives of Black and Brown people would be needlessly put at risk.

The damage doesn't end there. Changes to the census tend to ripple across federal data systems. If race and ethnicity disappear from the census, health surveys are likely to follow. We would be unable to see who is getting sick, to direct prevention to communities with the greatest burden, or gauge how well prevention efforts are working. Consider:

- New mothers. Black women face far higher risks of dying from pregnancy-related causes. Without reliable data, we cannot track or close that gap. Consider:
- People living with chronic disease. Diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and heart disease strike communities of color unequally. Targeted care depends on knowing where the need is greatest.
- Those struggling with addiction. The overdose crisis has shifted sharply across racial groups, with Blacks now dying from overdoses at higher rates, despite similar drug usage as Whites. Losing that visibility means losing lives we could have saved.

Census counts also guide how federal dollars flow. Programs at the Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies use population data to distribute resources. Some tribal grant programs rely directly on the census category for American Indian and Alaska Native people to determine funding. Change what the census measures, and you change where help goes. Communities that have been historically underserved would be pushed even further to the margins.

The proposal would also change the definition of "usual residence" to exclude undocumented immigrants from the numbers used to allocate seats in the House of Representatives. It goes further still, excluding people living here lawfully whose status is deemed less permanent than a

green card, such as workers on visas like H-1 B visas.

These changes are blatant violations of the Constitution. The 14th Amendment requires counting "the whole number of persons in each State." It says persons, not citizens, not green card holders. Our census has never excluded residents because of immigration status. Courts, state attorneys general, and civil rights organizations have already signaled they are prepared to challenge this rule, as they successfully did against a similar effort before the 2020 count.

The political effects would be profound. Census data shape congressional seats, Electoral College votes, and district maps at every level of government. Excluding immigrants would shift power away from younger, more racially diverse urban communities and toward older, whiter rural areas. Citizens of color who live alongside immigrant neighbors would see their own voices diluted. That is discrimination by design.

The rule would also prohibit any census question on sexual orientation. The 2020 census asked whether couples living together were same-sex or opposite-sex partners. Advocates and past Justice Department leaders have long argued that fuller data are needed to protect LGBTQ+ people from discrimination. Banning these questions closes the door on that progress and renders LGBTQ+ Americans, including LGBTQ+ people of color, invisible in federal statistics.

The damage from this proposal may already be taking root in our society. Discriminatory efforts like this can breed fear and distrust. Latino residents have been undercounted in past censuses, and this latest push threatens to deepen that gap. Earlier this year, the administration inserted a citizenship question into a field test form, despite the Bureau's own research showing such questions harm accuracy. Every undercounted family means less funding, weaker representation, and poorer health planning for years to come.

The public comment period on this proposal closes on October 13, a remarkably quick timeline for a change of this magnitude. I urge every person, organization, health professional, and elected leader to submit a meaningful public comment, explaining how this rule would harm your community, your work, and your health.

The census belongs to all of us. It is how America affirms that every person matters. We can’t allow it to become a tool for erasing the very people it was meant to count.
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A comment template can be found at https://handsoffourcens.us/comment-guide.html
It can be SUBMITTED HERE
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