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PRESS STATEMENT

U.S. Census Bureau Ends Count Early, Underrepresenting Impacted Communities of Color

The Trump administration mounts attack on fair and accurate census count

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Monday, the U.S. Census Bureau cut the response period [deadline early](#) by an entire month, disproportionately affecting the counting of Black, Brown, Indigenous and immigrant communities. The census determines the allocation of nearly \$1.5 trillion in federal funds yearly for essential programs and is used to determine representation in the House of Representatives based on population. The move comes after the Trump administration released a [memo](#) in late July calling for the exclusion of unauthorized immigrants from the count that decides seats in Congress, which critics said would lead to undercounting marginalized groups and people of color. Spokespersons for North Dakota Native Vote, Western Native Voice, and Idaho Organization of Resource Councils made the following statements in reaction to the decision:

“Nearly all of our tribal communities are drastically undercounted in North Dakota. Communities with a response rate of less than 30% are considered crisis areas. The Census Bureau must be given adequate time, especially during this pandemic to accurately count, tabulate, and report the resident population of our communities. The Constitutional mandate of the U.S. Census to provide accurate data for redistricting and funding is being purposely undermined. We need our communities to act now and complete the Census.” **Wes Davis, Chairman, North Dakota Native Vote**

“When I heard the news of the change, my heart sank thinking about what is at stake for our Native communities, our state, and our country. We have necessary tribal programs such as healthcare and housing that are federally funded and will be severely impacted by an undercount. COVID-19 implications initially halted all census activities on our tribal nations and were resumed in July on some tribal nations. However, non response follow up has not been approved by all tribal nations hardest hit by the pandemic, so our communities are way behind schedule and cutting us short of 31 days in October will be devastating for many families that rely on federally funded services. It will also jeopardize our Native majority voting districts here in Montana, which our Native leaders have fought long and hard for. Losing those districts

would be another move to silence our Native voices. I call on the decision-makers to find the courage to allow those 31 more days to ensure we are complying with the constitution and counting all people living in the United States of America. ” **Marci McLean, Executive Director, Western Native Voice**

“There is no reason why immigrants in the U.S. should be excluded from Census data. The Constitution requires that everyone in the United States be counted in the census. There is no exception. Everyone - adults, children, young, old, citizens, and non-citizens are to be counted. Everyone must be counted in order to allocate funding for federal programs, give accurate representation in congress, the electoral college, and the state legislature. All communities should be counted within the appropriate and necessary period of time in order for us to receive the representation and services we all need.” **Marielena Vega, Vision 2C Resource Council, Idaho Organization of Resource Councils.**

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North Dakota Native Vote (NDNV) counteract the ongoing colonization of our lands, minds, and bodies by identifying systems that continue to subjugate our communities. We work to learn disparities in civil rights, food systems, energy security/democracy, climate chaos, and policy that disproportionately affects our people and how we interact within and contribute to these systems.

Western Native Voice is a non-profit, non-partisan social justice organization working to inspire Native leadership through community organizing, education, leadership, and advocacy. With 7% of Montana’s population being Native American living almost evenly split between reservation and urban areas, WNV organizes in both rural and urban communities using a culturally tailored community organizing model to build Native leadership.

The Idaho Organization of Resource Councils is an Idaho-based grassroots nonprofit that empowers people to improve the well-being of their communities, sustain family farms and ranches, transform local food systems, promote clean energy, and advocate for responsible stewardship of Idaho’s natural resources.

The Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) is a network of grassroots organizations that span seven of the Western states with more than 15,000 members, whose mission is to advance the vision of a democratic, sustainable, and just society through community action. Headquartered in Billings, Montana, WORC also has offices in Colorado and Washington, D.C.