



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo continues push to extend 2020 Census response deadline

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO September 25, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC; COVID-19; CENSUS**

Following a ruling by a federal judge to extend the deadline for completing the 2020 Census by a month, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, today reiterated his call for additional time for the U.S. Census Bureau to collect information to obtain an accurate count of the nation's population.

On Thursday, U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh issued a preliminary injunction requiring the U.S. Census Bureau continue its counting efforts until Oct. 31. Judge Koh, according to reports, found that the shortened census schedule would result in an undercount, producing inaccurate reporting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey, which is conducted every 10 years, was scheduled to wrap up Sept. 30.

However, in light of the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, Sen. Griffo believes that the completion deadline should be pushed back even further.

“Unfortunately, COVID-19 has led to delays and a decline in responses in some areas,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “These are extraordinary times that require untraditional approaches. So much depends on the accuracy of Census count, including funding, representation and who we are as a nation. The most logical way for the Census Bureau to accomplish its objective of a complete count is to extend the deadline to sometime after the coronavirus pandemic has

ended. Such an extension would give the bureau more time to gather data and ensure that more people are counted correctly.”

Sen. Griffo also believes that Congress should consider legislative action to provide more time for the public to complete the Census. Earlier this week, he sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy in support of recently introduced legislation that would extend the Census deadline to Oct. 31.

While he believes that the Census should be completed post-pandemic, Sen. Griffo also recognizes that every bit of additional time for the public to respond will be beneficial.

“Conducting the Census under normal circumstances is challenging but trying to complete an accurate count during a pandemic and under the extreme conditions in which we find ourselves is difficult and illogical,” **Sen. Griffo wrote in his letter to federal officials.** “As you know, so much depends on the accuracy of the Census count, including federal aid, grants, funding for housing and health assistance and local, state and federal redistricting. However, with the time available to complete the Census shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is becoming obvious by reports and concerning that we will not get a complete count of the nation’s population. Here in New York for instance, we have seen Census participation lag despite efforts at all levels of government to promote and support and educate the public about the initiative.”

The full text of that letter is below:

Sept. 22, 2020

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy

322 Hart Senate Office Building W

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. McCarthy:

I write in support of legislation that would extend the deadline to respond to 2020 U.S. Census. This legislation, introduced by Sens. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska and Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii and Reps. Don Young, R-Alaska, and Ruben Gallego, D-Arizona, is vitally important to Census Bureau efforts to ensure that the Census is accurate and that all individuals, families and communities are counted.

Conducting the Census under normal circumstances is challenging but trying to complete an accurate count during a pandemic and under the extreme conditions in which we find ourselves is difficult and illogical. As you know, so much depends on the accuracy of the Census count, including federal aid, grants, funding for housing and health assistance and local, state and federal redistricting. However, with the time available to complete the Census shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is becoming obvious by reports and concerning that we will not get a complete count of the nation's population. Here in New York for instance, we have seen Census participation lag despite efforts at all levels of government to promote and support and educate the public about the initiative.

The legislation that has been introduced will provide the U.S. Census Bureau with the necessary amount of time to collect and process data, and it will provide individuals with the time they need to participate in the Census. This will help to ensure that states do not lose out on crucial federal funding for their residents, families and communities and representation in government due to an undercount.

I would welcome any opportunity to further discuss this issue with you or members of your staff at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Griffo

New York State Senator, 47th Senate District

cc: Senate Minority Leader Sen. Charles Schumer, Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, Speaker of the House of Representatives Rep. Nancy Pelosi