

Considerations for drafting your comment to the United States Census Bureau

Cite the docket: “Decennial Census of the Population of Americans; Proposed Residence Criteria and Proposed Regulations for Demographic Questions” (Docket No. 260903-0005, Document 2026-18481, published September 10, 2026).

Describe who you are: occupation, Illinois resident, retired, etc.

State why the census is important to you: representative government, for appropriation of services, funding, private and community planning, etc.

Oppose these changes:

Would exclude those who are present in the United States but are not citizens, including visa-holders, refugees, asylum seekers or do not have lawful permanent resident status, by including a question about immigration status.

Why it matters: The purpose of the census is to count all people. By eliminating people who are physically present but are not citizens or lawful permanent residents, the count leaves out large numbers of people, including international students, work visa holders, recognized refugees and asylymes, and those with pending green card applications.

Would change the prior residence criteria of usual residence as of April 1st to now include a “census enumeration period” from January 3 to April 1 with a tax records test for where you live.

Why it matters: By adding a ‘census enumeration period’ and adding tax records, several groups can be counted in the wrong place: snowbirds, seasonal workers, movers, rural P.O. box filers, college students, and service members.

Would eliminate demographic questions about race and ethnicity, and ban any future questions about sexual orientation.

Why it matters: The U.S. has asked about race in every census since our first in 1790. Information on race and ethnicity is critical for public health and civil rights enforcement and should not be banned. This is the best source for reliable data, affecting several other government agencies and departments. Losing the baseline data also greatly hampers the ability to monitor and enforce anti-discrimination laws, including the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act. Demographic data are relied on by both the public and private sector for a wide range of purposes, including public health, emergency planning, resource allocation and planning, and education. The loss of Federal Dollars affects programs that are needed most by members of our communities.