

# U.S. SENATOR BEN CARDIN



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Friend,

Since the founding of our country, an official counting takes place every 10 years to determine how many people are here, in the United States of America, as required under Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution.

This year, 2020, is a census year. I know that 2020 has not been the year any of us expected, as we deal with COVID-19 and all the risks and changes that have come along with this pandemic. But the census remains one of the most important activities taking place this year.

The census aims to count the entire population of the nation, at the location where each person usually lives. The goal is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place. It asks questions of people in homes and group living situations, including how many people live or stay in each home, and the sex, age, and race of each person.

Everyone should participate in the census, not only so that we can have a fair count and clear picture of our population, but also so our communities receive the resources they need.

The census drives the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of

Representatives so we all have fair political representation at the federal, state and local levels.

It also drives the allocation of billions of dollars in federal funds— as well as state and local resources – that help keep us safe, provide for our health care, education and public safety.

Federal funds, grants and support to states, counties, cities, and communities are based on population totals and breakdowns by sex, age, race, and other factors. Your community benefits the most when the census counts everyone in it. [When you respond to the census, you help your community receive its fair share of the more than \\$675 billion per year in federal funds](#) spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works, and other vital programs.

Businesses use census data to decide where to build factories, offices and stores, and this creates jobs. Developers use the census to build new homes and revitalize old neighborhoods. Local governments use the census for public safety and emergency preparedness. Residents use the census to support community initiatives involving legislation, quality of life, and consumer advocacy.

During a public health crisis, such as a pandemic, we see more clearly how important these funding allocations can be to our communities. That is why we want to ensure that every person is counted, especially members of historically underrepresented and under-reached communities.

In Maryland, [we lose an estimated \\$1,800 for each person who goes uncoun ted](#), per year. And remember, that's for 10 years.

As just one example, in Prince George's County, in 2000, there was an undercount, which resulted in an estimated loss of almost \$27 million in federal funding for eight prominent federal programs between 2002 and 2012. For the 2010 census, the county put its total rate of omissions at 8.3 percent – approximately 73,000 individuals. This was the highest net undercount of any county in Maryland, and one of the highest net undercounts in the nation among counties with 100,000 residents or more.

Currently, for 2020, the national response rate for the census is about 64.6 percent. In Maryland, we are slightly better at about 69 percent. Carroll County leads at 80.6 percent response. Baltimore City is at 54 percent. Clearly, we have a ways to go in this last month.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made conducting the census much more challenging. At the very time the U.S. Census Bureau was beginning to ramp-up its outreach prior to the April 1 “Census Day,” states began to shut down to flatten the curve of infections. Census operations were stalled. Planned in-person census gathering activities were postponed.

Unfortunately, problems began even earlier, when President Trump attempted to add an unnecessary question about citizenship to the 2020 census. This is not required by the Constitution. In June 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the question, but the rhetoric and negative publicity undoubtedly discouraged many people in our country from responding to the questionnaire.

Last month, President Trump issued a memo that aims to bar undocumented immigrants from being included in the census, for the purpose of deciding how many Members of Congress are apportioned to each state. Per the 14th Amendment, “Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed.”

Rejecting tens of millions of individuals from the decennial census, for the purpose of skewing the numbers for congressional districts and removing congressional representation, is unconstitutional and will have detrimental effects on immigrant communities across the country.

**Please do your part for your community by responding as soon as possible.**

Because of the pandemic, U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced last April that the enumeration (the census counting process) would continue through October. However, earlier this month, they announced that the enumeration will be completed by September 30, 2020 – one month earlier than expected.

That means there is little more than one month left for critical door-knocking efforts by enumerators and collecting responses online, over the phone, and by mail. I have joined many other Members of Congress co-sponsoring legislation and urging the administration to extend the deadline to ensure a more accurate count.

The pandemic has made it so we all need to work a little harder to get a full and accurate count. We should not prematurely end the counting process that COVID-19 has already interrupted.

**So how do you complete your census questionnaire? There are three simple ways.**

- 1. Go online to [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov) – this is the first census being conducted online!**
- 2. Call 844-330-2020 (English) or 844-468-2020 (Spanish).**
- 3. Complete and return the paper questionnaire you probably received in the mail, if you still have it.**

I urge you to complete your census questionnaire and then make sure that every person you know fills out his or her form as well.

Be assured that your personal information is kept confidential. The U.S. Census Bureau compiles your responses with information from other households to produce statistics, which never identify your home or any person in your home.

The census is important. Deadlines are approaching. I need you to help others understand how important this is to our communities.

The Constitution is clear that every person in our country should be counted. So let's do it.

Thank you. Please stay safe.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben".

Ben Cardin

**For more information about the 2020 Census and how you can get involved, check out my recent Facebook Live event with Beth Lynk of the Census Counts Campaign and Gloria Aparicio Blackwell of the University of Maryland Office of Community Engagement. I think you will agree that it was a great discussion.**

Facebook: [facebook.com/senatorbencardin/videos/360598205345090](https://facebook.com/senatorbencardin/videos/360598205345090)

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