

Resolution
Every Rhode Islander Should Be Counted in 2020 Census
“I COUNT. YOU COUNT. WE ALL COUNT.”

Sponsored by:

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution requires that the Census be conducted every ten years to count the population; and

WHEREAS, households will be invited to complete the 2020 Census questionnaire beginning on March 12, 2020; and

WHEREAS, an incomplete count of Rhode Island’s population in the 2020 Census will likely result in the loss of a congressional seat in the United States House of Representatives, which would leave the State with only one congressional delegate for the first time since 1789; and

WHEREAS, population data collected during the 2020 Census will help determine the allocation of more than \$680 billion dollars in federal funds among the states each year for the next ten years; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island receives approximately \$3.8 billion in federal funds each year, comprising more than one-third of the State’s annual budget; and

WHEREAS, these federal dollars represent funding for education, health care, transportation, public safety, small businesses, housing, clean water, waste disposal and other community programs and services; and

WHEREAS, local jurisdictions across Rhode Island use Census data to make decisions concerning the need for infrastructure projects, economic development programs, job training, health care services, and other community resources; and

WHEREAS, a lack of public awareness about the purpose of the Census and its importance for our communities, exacerbated by widespread misinformation about the Census, may result in a disproportionate undercount of historically marginalized communities, particularly among immigrants and individuals with limited English proficiency; and

WHEREAS, for the first time in United States history the Census will be conducted primarily online, creating potential barriers for communities with limited internet access; and

WHEREAS, one-quarter of Rhode Island’s population lives in “hard-to-count” Census tracts where obtaining a fair and accurate count has historically proven to be difficult, including such communities as Woonsocket, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, South Kingstown, and Newport; and

WHEREAS, it will require the united action of all Rhode Island towns and cities to ensure a complete and accurate count in the State and, furthermore, it will be vitally important for city and

town governments to be active in supporting local census outreach and education efforts through a variety of means, including presentations, websites, electronic newsletters, social media posts, and mailings; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recognizes the critical importance of a complete and accurate Census count in 2020 and actively encourages all residents to participate in the 2020 Census beginning on March 12, 2020, and to become involved in peer education and outreach about the Census; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that every council member will promote participation in the Census by signing up for the pledge tool by texting Pledge to (401) 205.3434; that every council member will consider other ways to promote Census participation, including integrating messages into regular constituent communications, and that every council member will help increase the count in their respective wards using the resources and materials developed by the Rhode Island Complete Count Committee in their Census promotion efforts.