



# California Complete Count Committee

## **DRAFT** Meeting Minutes

### March 9, 2021



**Date:** March 9, 2021

**Time:** 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

**Location:** Virtual: Via Webinar

#### Committee Members Present:

- **Acting Committee Chair Tho Vinh Banh**, Disability Rights California
- **Gita Amar**, PMK BNC
- **Miguel Bustos**, Center for Social Justice, GLIDE SF
- **Carolyn Coleman**, League of California Cities
- **Kathleen Domingo**, Archdiocese of Los Angeles
- **Amy Fairweather**, Swords to Plowshares' Institute for Veteran Policy
- **Nicholas Hatten**, San Joaquin Pride Center
- **Lisa Hershey**, Housing California
- **Jesus Martinez**, Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative
- **Gerald McIntyre**, Justice in Aging
- **Keisha Nzewi**, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- **Susan Shain**, Swing Left San Francisco
- **Regina Brown Wilson**, California Black Media
- **Christopher Wilson**, Alliance San Diego
- **Tom Wong**, University of California, San Diego

#### Committee Members Absent:

- **Committee Chair Alex Padilla**, Senator
- **Francis Guzman**, National Center for Youth Law
- **Alma Hernandez**, Service Employees International Union CA State Council
- **Marian Kaanon**, Stanislaus Community Foundation
- **Loren Kaye**, California Chamber of Commerce
- **Eloy Ortiz Oakley**, California Community Colleges
- **Tom Saenz**, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- **Lee Salter**, McConnell Foundation
- **Robert Smith**, Pala Band of Mission Indians

#### California Complete Count Staff Present:

- **Kristine Beckley**, Legal Counsel
- **Frances Chacon**, [Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs](#)
- **Martha Dominguez**, Deputy Director for External Affairs and Media
- **Alicia Gallegos**, Office Technician

- **Dorothy Johnson**, Policy Advisor
- **Ditas Katague**, Director
- **Jim Miller**, Operations Project Manager
- **Yumi Sera**, Deputy Director of Statewide Initiatives
- **Emilio Vaca**, Deputy Director, Outreach

#### **Government Operations Staff Present:**

- **Sarah Soto-Taylor**, Deputy Secretary of Census

#### **U.S. Census Bureau Staff Present:**

- None

#### **Presenters:**

- **Lizette Mata**, Deputy Secretary of State, Operations

#### **Handouts and Presentations:**

- March 9, 2021 Meeting Agenda
- March 9, 2021 Meeting PowerPoint Presentation
- Draft-Final Committee Report to the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
- Portfolio of Snapshots: Regional and Statewide Outreach Partners
- Census 2020 Self-Response Rate Summary Data through 01/28/2021

## **1. Opening Procedures**

Acting Chair Tho Vinh Bahn called the California Complete Count Committee (Committee) meeting to order at 10:00 am. A quorum was established with fourteen members present.

Kristine Beckley, Legal Counsel, California Complete Count – Census 2020 (Census Office), offered instructions for online public participation. Public participants were provided multiple opportunities to make appropriate comments on any issue before the Committee: at the time the item was discussed, during the general comment period under agenda Item #5, and up to one day following the meeting. Written comments were submitted by the following modes: email to [info@census.ca.gov](mailto:info@census.ca.gov), in the chat feature of the webinar, or by mail. Documents referenced during the meeting were made available via the chat window and online at [census.ca.gov](https://census.ca.gov).

## **Opening Remarks**

Acting Chair Bahn expressed her strong support of Chair Alex Padilla, who was recently elected United States Senator. As Chair Padilla was unable to attend this final Committee meeting, he offered a video recording of his remarks conveying deep gratitude for all partners, official and unofficial, for their contributions in achieving a high count for the State. In the video, he said partners were relentless in their determination and commitment toward the goal of a complete count despite numerous obstacles encountered. He continued that he now has the tremendous honor of representing California in the U.S. Senate, where his personal commitment to the census continues, to ensure all Californians are counted and receive the level of resources deserved. Senator Padilla said he considered it a privilege to serve alongside the Committee members for the last three years, and thanked them for their service to the State.

This is the final meeting of the 2020 California Complete Count Committee. The Committee's efforts sunset in Spring 2021.

## **Approval of September 1, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

A correction was made to the spelling of Tho Vinh Bahn's last name on Page 5. The Committee unanimously adopted meeting minutes as amended.

## **2. State Census Office Updates**

### **Campaign Highlights**

Sarah Soto-Taylor, Deputy Secretary, Government Operations Agency, and Ditas Katague, Census Office Executive Director, provided campaign highlights, including outcomes and lessons learned. The Census Office will submit various campaign reports, including the Committee's Final Report to the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, the Census Office's Final Report, and over 150 Partner organization final reports, by June 2021. Reports, data summary sheets, and an independent evaluation of engagement strategies will be available on [census.ca.gov](https://census.ca.gov). Reports will include recommendations and insights for the 2030 Census campaign.

Ms. Soto-Taylor reviewed the Census 2020 campaign design, noting that methods were informed by data (including community demographics and population sizes) and adaptable to ever-changing community environments.

State resources and guidance supported local networks for trusted messengers to collaborate with familiar and new partners across sectors. The State established a goal to activate at least 2 million households to complete the census form during the self-response period. California exceeded this goal, with 2.5 million responses received.

California had a final self-response rate (SRR) of 69.6%, above the national SRR of 67.0%, and exceeding the State's 2010 SRR of 68.2%. At the local level, 45 of 58 counties met or exceeded their 2010 SRRs.

Communications and outreach campaign efforts accomplished the following statewide outcomes:

- 6,000,000,000 media impressions made
- 300 local ethnic media partners engaged
- 51 state agencies and departments conducted outreach
- 96% of the state's limited English proficiency (LEP) population were supported by the Language and Communication Access Plan
- 644,806 partner activities were reported, including public events, peer-to-peer presentations, canvassing, and phone banking
- 200,359 patch-through calls were made to the U.S. Census Bureau through the State's phone banking campaign

Ms. Katague next reviewed the State's funding allocated to the ten census regions, stating that augmented investments later in the campaign significantly aided in boosting total SRRs. She pointed out the substantial financial investment of \$32.2 million made in Region 8, Los Angeles. Despite this, SRRs were low in this region, and deeper analysis is needed to understand the factors impacting the score.

The State's total investment in 2020 Census operations was \$187.2 million at the end of December 2020. This is an unprecedented investment that supported new and strengthened networks at the local, regional and statewide levels; greater understanding of local populations and community groups; development of the Statewide Outreach and Rapid Deployment (SwORD) tool to support planning and real-time decision-making for statewide partners; and other outcomes.

Ms. Katague commented that early efforts, beginning in mid-2017, laid the groundwork for essential capacity and collaboration building. The integrated, local-network approach of the census campaign, along with a significant multi-year budget and use of dynamic digital tools, allowed for the level of success achieved.

Member Questions and Discussion:

- Acting Chair Bahn thanked Ms. Soto-Taylor and Ms. Katague for their leadership, most especially in light of International Women's Day.
- Member Regina Brown Wilson said she would like to review and analyze disaggregated regional data on the African American community, to improve outreach and increase the response rates during the 2030 Census. She also commended Census Office staff and community partners for their work.
  - Ms. Katague shared that disaggregated data for African American communities will be available around September 2021. At that time, deeper analysis can be conducted.
- Member Lisa Hershey stated she has been humbled and honored to serve on the Committee since its inception, and thanked staff and peers for their efforts. She said the infrastructure and networking built through census was impressive. She will employ lessons learned from this effort in her new position on the State's Covid-19 Community Vaccine Advisory Committee.
- Member Christopher Wilson also expressed thanks to Ms. Katague, Ms. Soto-Taylor and the Census Office. When considering lessons learned, he recommended reviewing communications contracts and the ability of contractors to reach hard-to-count communities and work collaboratively with local organizations in these areas.
  - Ms. Soto-Taylor appreciated this suggestion, noting that contracting with media partners will be further explored in the campaign evaluation and final reports.
- Member Jesus Martinez thanked the Census Office staff and partners. He suggested to begin organizational efforts for the next decennial census as soon as this year. He shared that his organization is involved in advocacy efforts to revise the questionnaire form so the next census is reflective of all identities of all residents. He also shared that some organizations in the Central Valley experienced staff loss or turnover mid-campaign, inadvertently hampering local outreach efforts. He suggested for 2030 that continuous, modest financial investments in organizations involved in census efforts be made to ensure organizational staff capacity throughout the campaign duration. Lastly, he asked if the State will keep the Census Office operational to continue work and begin preparations for 2030.

- Ms. Katague responded that the federal administration determines the Census 2030 implementation framework. Federal partners at the U.S. Census Bureau will be working on the Census 2030 framework over the next 18 months. She encouraged interested parties to track these efforts and participate in public meetings to influence designs so that they integrate recent lessons learned.
- Member Brown Wilson stated that, should a Complete Count Committee be established for the next census, appointed members, as well as future Census Office staff, should read meeting minutes and reports before engaging in planning efforts.
- Member Hershey acknowledged that more equity was built into this census process than in any previous campaign. She sees the ability to adapt, address inequities, and respond to social justice movements as a transformation from California's typical way of doing business.

Public Comment:

- A public member, who participated in the Kern County Local Complete Count Committee and was a partnership specialist with the U.S. Census Bureau, suggested SwORD would be useful for the 2020 redistricting process. He further recommended the Committee reach out to the California Citizens Redistricting Commission and share recommendations for improving their process based on lessons learned from the census campaign.
- A public member from the Central Valley Urban Institute stated he had expressed his concerns at a prior meeting regarding the undercount of the African American community. Senator Padilla had directed staff to contact his organization, though no communications were documented. He believes the African American population in the Central Valley was undercounted and underserved. He expressed support for Member Brown Wilsons' suggestion for close analysis of disaggregated data by county to help address this ongoing issue.

### **3. Review and Approval of Final Committee Report to the Governor**

Acting Chair Bahn explained that the draft March 2021 *Final Report to the Office of Governor Newsom* includes input from individual Committee members on their focused efforts to engage, educate, and activate toward the 2020 Census. It also includes input from the Secretary of State's Office.

The Committee reviewed the draft Final Report on-screen and made several minor corrections in real time. Members also added the following bullet point under Section IV. Reflections and Recommendations, subsection *Building Connections and Representation*:

Ensure greater transparency, oversight, and accountability in state-led Census efforts, including the creation of new spaces and institutional structures that allow hard-to-count communities, such as African Americans, to be equitably represented in pre-planning and decision-making processes.

Member Brown Wilson emphasized the need for an equity lens in state-supported partnerships and in all census efforts generally. She commented that more black-led organizations should be supported in census leadership and engagement roles. This would presumably help to address the undercount of the African American community.

Member Wilson agreed, sharing that he perceived a lack of African American presence in media contractors and a lack of awareness by them of the African American community. He recommends increased hiring of capable African American media specialists to support appropriate communications, messaging, materials development, etc. in all future census efforts.

There was no public comment on this item.

The Committee's *Final Report to the Office of Governor Newsom* was adopted as amended, with all members voting in favor.

#### **4. Secretary of State Census Challenge Recognition**

Lizette Mata, Deputy Secretary of State, Operations, provided an overview of and highlights from the California Census Challenge. United States Senator Padilla, in his former role as Secretary of State, launched the California Census Challenge for nine weeks starting in mid-August and ending on October 16, 2020 as a method to enhance outreach efforts in low-responding census areas, especially in hard-to-count communities.

The California Census Challenge consists of two categories, highest SSR in the State and most improved SSR by jurisdiction: at the city and county level. The most improved SSR measured from the beginning of the competition to its close.

To account for differences in size of jurisdictions, three tier levels were developed for cities and counties in both categories (see below for tier breakdowns).

The Secretary of State's Office developed a special social media toolkit for the Challenge, with sharable digital collateral (graphics, infographics, messaging, etc.) to promote census. This toolkit was shared with hundreds of partners across California, including community leaders, government officials, cities and counties, constitutional officers, and higher education institutions. Additionally, cities and counties posted weekly on social media and tracked social media engagement through the consistent likes, comments, and shares of the city and county infographics.

To encourage friendly competition, the Secretary of State's website ([CensusChallenge.sos.ca.gov](https://CensusChallenge.sos.ca.gov)) featured the Challenge for its duration, with rankings of the highest and most improved census self-response rates in all of California's 482 cities and 58 counties updated weekly.

By the conclusion of the Challenge, California demonstrated a 4.6% overall statewide increase in SRR, moving the State to 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation for highest SRR. Despite California being the largest and hardest to count state in the nation, and the difficulty of an ever-changing deadline, California concluded the 2020 Census with a 69.6% SRR (10.5 million households).

Ms. Mata shared the California Census Challenge champions. Digital certificates were presented to each city and county:

- Most Improved SRR
  - City
    - population of under 5,000: Vernon +14.3%
    - population 5,000 – 50,000: Huron +9.40%
    - population of over 50,000: Perris +6.70%
  - County
    - population of under 5,000: Glenn +5.0%
    - population 5,000 – 50,000: Kings +5.0%
    - population of over 50,000: San Joaquin +5.30%
- Highest SRR (as of October 27, 2020)
  - City
    - population of under 5,000: Monte Sereno 82.5%
    - population 5,000 – 50,000: Piedmont 90.0%
    - population of over 50,000: Yorba Linda + Mission Viejo 84.6%
  - County
    - population of under 5,000: Sutter 71.7%
    - population 5,000 – 50,000: Marin 76.3%

- population of over 50,000: San Mateo 78.6%

Ms. Mata lastly shared a video montage of numerous State and local elected officials celebrating the success of their regions in achieving these high SRR scores and their contributions toward a statewide complete count.

#### Member Questions and Discussion:

- Acting Chair Bahn expressed thanks to everyone participating in the Census Challenge. She said she was pleased that 2020 Census efforts included disability communities and hopes that efforts only increase to involve these communities in future census campaigns.
- Member Gita Amar suggested a media blitz to share final SRR for cities, counties, and the state as a whole.

#### Public Comment:

- A public member expressed thanks to members of his community and Census Office staff for their continued partnerships and collaborative efforts. He is pleased to share recognition of the top-performing cities and counties with his colleagues and community members.

### **5. General Public Comment Period**

As this was the Committee's final meeting, Acting Chair Bahn invited Census Office staff to share comments. Emilio Vaca, Yumi Sera, Martha Dominguez, and Ms. Katague expressed their appreciation to colleagues and partners, for leadership, guidance, support, resources, and camaraderie shared over the last several years. Many Committee members followed these comments with their own expressions of gratitude. Several notes of appreciation were shared by public members via the meeting's chat box.

### **6. Adjourn**

Acting Chair Bahn again thanked Committee members past and present for their service, thanked all staff, partners, and public members for their participation, and wished everyone continued good health.

**The meeting was adjourned at 12:22 pm.**