

September 29, 2020

The Honorable Brian Schatz
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dan Sullivan
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schatz, Murkowski, and Sullivan,

As organizations representative of the 1.6 million nonprofits in America, we write to thank you for introducing S. 4571, the Census Deadline Extensions Act of 2020, and offer our support. This important legislation would extend the deadline for delivery of apportionment data to the U.S. House of Representatives to April 30, 2021 and the deadline for delivery of redistricting data to the states to July 31, 2021. Notably, it would also compel the Census Bureau to continue field operations through October 31, 2020 – the originally scheduled end date.

We are members of the Nonprofit Infrastructure Investment Advocacy Group (NIIAG), which supports policies that recognize the essential role community and civic infrastructure plays in meeting the challenges of the public health and economic crisis unleashed by COVID-19. We believe it is critical that legislators recognize the fundamental importance of community and civic structures that ensure all communities across America, especially those disproportionately impacted by this pandemic, can rebuild, engage, and thrive.

As you are aware, the 4-month extension of statutory deadlines envisioned by your legislation is in keeping with initial requests from the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Census Bureau to Congress. Out of similar deference to the agency and the dedicated professionals who tirelessly execute the census, many of our organizations wrote to Congress in July to request an identical statutory extension.

Congress has a responsibility to help ensure a fair and accurate census is conducted every ten years. Communities across the nation are incredibly dependent on the integrity of the census process as it informs the allocation of vital community resources for the following decade. While there are many reasons that an accurate census is essential, nonprofits specifically rely on accurate census data to target our services and track our collective progress. An inaccurate count will undermine nonprofit work, and the health of our communities, for decades to come.

We thank you for your legislation and for your work to protect this linchpin of American democracy. Just as nonprofit organizations are an indispensable partner in carrying out the census, we hope our organizations can continue to partner with you to uphold Congress' fundamental responsibility to oversee it.

Sincerely,

Americans for the Arts
Arts Action Fund
City Parks Alliance
Communities In Schools
Community Resource Center

Enterprise Community Partners
The Henry Ford
Independent Sector
KABOOM!
League of United Latin American Citizens
MENTOR
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Recreation and Park Association
National Urban Indian Family Coalition
Native Ways Federation
PolicyLink
StriveTogether
United Philanthropy Forum
United Way Worldwide
VolunteerMatch
YWCA USA