

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM

To: IRENE BUENO
6-5581

From: Woyneab Wondwossen
Presidential Letters and Messages
Voice 202/456-5492 Fax 202/456-5426

☐ Please see comments below ☐ Please advise on how to respond ☐ Please call me regarding the attached

☐ For your information ☒ For your approval ☐ Per your request

☐ No response necessary for attached letter, unless response otherwise recommended ☐ For your agency's response ☐ Please respond by:

Comments:

Irene: Please let me know if attached draft is OK.
Thanks & welcome aboard!

Wayne

Robyn Bachman - Keenan

Caroline Wu -

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February 8 1999

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
 President of the United States
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my concerns on one of the most important civil rights issues for the 106th Congress: ensuring a fair and accurate census count in 2000.

First, I would like to thank you and your Administration for your continued diligence in the fight for a fair and complete census in 2000. On several occasions over the last few years, you vetoed appropriations legislation or threatened to veto legislation, due to the inclusion of language that would have hindered the Census Bureau's ability to develop the most accurate census using scientific methods that is proven to reduce the undercount among minorities.

As you already know, the 1990 Census undercounted 8.4 million Americans, a disproportionate number of them Black and Hispanic. As a result, the Census Bureau resolved to use modern statistical methods, include sampling, for the 2000 Census, in order to correct the errors, an approach that was supported by the National Academy of Sciences and members of the statistical community.

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5 to 4 decision, January 25, 1999, involving the decennial census (*Department of Commerce et al. V. United States House of Representatives et al. No. 98-404*) where a slim majority of the court decided that the use of scientific statistical sampling to improve the accuracy of the 2000 Census for purposes of apportioning congressional seats among the states violates the Census Act. The opinion of the court did not, however, prohibit the use of sampling for other purposes, such as allocation of funds and redistricting. Instead, the court decided that the government is allowed to use statistical methods for purposes other than apportionment, if feasible, by determination of the Secretary of Commerce. This means that the more accurate, adjusted figures can be used in drawing within each state the congressional, state and local legislative district lines.

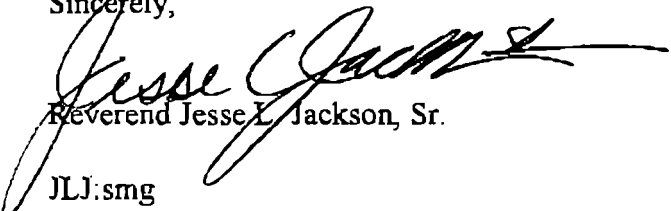
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Thus, the Census Bureau may conduct the 2000 census using the traditional enumeration methods, followed by a post-enumeration survey where modern statistical methods can be used to enhance the accuracy of the census. Again, the adjusted numbers must be used for allocation of federal funds and redistricting. Along with these adjusted numbers, the Census Bureau would release less accurate numbers to be used for only determining how many representatives are allocated to each state.

It is difficult for me to support the decision by the Supreme Court. While not counting African Americans has three-fifths of a person, has did the first census, it nevertheless continues ignoble and unfair tradition of undercounting minority Americans. Using less accurate and unadjusted numbers for apportionment will guarantee millions of America's urban and rural poor unequal representation in Congress.

In your State of the Union Address to Congress on January 19, 1999, you stated, "Now, since every person in America counts, every American ought to be counted. We need a census that uses modern scientific methods to do that." I hope that you will support legislation that will ensure the most accurate numbers used are for all purposes, including apportionment. We the people deserve no less. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,



Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

JLJ:smg

slr/draft/census.2.wmw

Wayne M. Wondwossen 3/2/98

Suggested draft response to 25 incoming letters regarding Census 2000.

Editors: Based on SOTU, President's address to U.S. Conference of Mayors, Secretary Daley Press Statement and DOC response language re: census.

Thank you for writing to express your concerns about the decennial census.

Our democracy is built upon the premise that every person in America counts, and as I said in my State of the Union address, every American ought to be counted. The census is vital to drawing legislative district boundaries, apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, and determining allocations for federal and state funds. For these important reasons, my Administration remains firmly committed to ensuring the most fair and accurate census possible.

To that end, I support the current plan of the Census Bureau to include the use modern scientific methods in the decennial census. This strategy was developed by statistical experts and based on recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences. As you point out, the recent Supreme Court ruling prohibits the use of sampling for congressional appointments among the states, but reaffirms our use of these scientific techniques for other purposes.

Secretary Daley and I are continuing to explore the best methods to secure an accurate accounting of the American people and to prevent the large undercounts of minorities, children, and other groups that occurred in the 1990 census. Your continued input will help to inform that endeavor.

Again, thank you for sharing your views.