



Prepared Statement of
THOMAS L. MESENBORG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
US CENSUS BUREAU

Information Policy, Census, and National Archives
Subcommittee
Oversight and Government Reform Committee

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*“The 2010 Census: Hard to Count Populations with Special
Living Conditions.”*

Chairman Clay, Ranking Member McHenry, Congressman Driehaus, members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you about the 2010 Census. The Census Bureau's primary goal is to count every one, count them once, and count them in the right place. This is a daunting goal and current economic conditions make this task even more difficult this decade. Foreclosures, displaced households and individuals, homelessness, natural disasters, and unusual living arrangements do pose challenges to the count, but we have procedures in place to ensure that we have done everything we can to count every one. However, economic dislocation may affect where people are counted.

THE CONCEPT OF USUAL RESIDENCE

Let me start with a brief discussion of one of the fundamental principles we use in conducting the count, -- "usual residence". The Census Bureau's usual residence rule is grounded in the Census Act of 1790, which governed the very first Census. The "concept of usual residence" remains intact today. The usual residence rule is intended to count people in the place where they eat and sleep most of the time.

CHALLENGES CREATED BY NON-TRADITIONAL LIVING CONDITIONS

I would like to start by describing some of the challenges we face because of economic dislocation and unusual or nontraditional living arrangements and what we are doing to address these challenges.

Most residents live in traditional living arrangements single family homes, townhouses, or apartments. Other residents do not live in a typical household but rather reside in a group quarters facility such as a college dormitory. We have tried and tested procedures and processes in place to count college students and other individuals living in group quarter facilities.

Because of economic conditions, many families and individuals have been forced to relocate. Some may have been forced to abandon their foreclosed homes and move into apartments, others may have moved in with family or friends, and other may be experiencing homelessness or living in campgrounds or other transitory locations.

While economic conditions may pose new challenges, we have procedures in place to count households or individuals that have been dislocated, living in nontraditional living arrangements, are homeless, or in college. Foreclosures are at record levels, but every foreclosed property, if still standing, is included on our Master Address File, whether or not the unit is occupied. Census forms will show up in 121 million mail boxes March 15-17, 2010. If the property is unoccupied, the form may be returned to us by the Postal Service as undeliverable, lowering the mail back response rate for a geographic area, but beginning May 1, all addresses from which we have not received a mailed back form will be contacted by an enumerator, -- up to six times-- in an effort to obtain a completed census form. Addresses that are designated as vacant and unoccupied during the Nonresponse Followup operation will have a population count of zero in the 2010

Census, but will still be included in the count. After all, it is a census of both population and housing.

Individuals and families that have moved will be sent a 2010 Census form at their new address. If people have moved in with their relatives or friends they should be counted as part of that household. We have added two new coverage questions to the short form to remind those responding to include everyone living at that address. We also have developed advertising directed at those segments of the population that may have been forced into nontraditional living arrangements because of economic conditions. Our vast network of partner organizations, now numbering over 200,000, also will help us get the message out about the importance of getting counted.

Procedures are in place to count college students that live in dorms or other college facilities. These students will be counted at the university or college dorm or fraternity house where they attend school. We have just completed the advance visit to all group quarter facilities and will begin data collection on April 1 2010. Students living in off campus housing will receive a 2010 Census form at their address and we will ask them to fill it out and mail it back. Parents whose child or children do not live at home will be instructed not to include them on the census form.

- Foreign students studying in the United States are counted at their household location or in college provided housing.
- United States students living abroad are excluded from the Census.

Respondents displaced by natural disaster for an extended period of time will generally be counted where they reside on or about April 1, 2010. Populations affected by Hurricanes Ike, Katrina and Rita will be counted where they currently live and sleep most of the time as of April 1, 2010, not where they may be visiting or staying on that day. For areas that were specifically affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Ike and Rita, we have taken special measures to ensure that we have an accurate count. We have hired staff early, provided extra training, added additional local offices, and launched an aggressive outreach and partnership efforts. Census workers will be hand delivering forms to every housing unit that is or may be habitable in hurricane affected areas in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. These workers will also update our address list and leave a questionnaire for any housing unit not previously identified.

ENUMERATING PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

In addition to the traditional enumeration of housing units and group quarters, the Census Bureau has developed its Service-Based Enumeration (SBE) operation to reach people experiencing homelessness. These people will be enumerated at the locations where they receive services. The SBE operation was specifically designed to enumerate people who use service facilities because they may be missed during the traditional enumeration of housing units and group quarters. These service locations and pre-identified outdoor locations include:

- **Shelters** - These are emergency and transitional shelters with sleeping facilities for people experiencing homelessness; women fleeing domestic abuse; and children who are runaways, neglected or experiencing homelessness.
- **Soup Kitchens** - These include static physical facilities commonly called “meal centers” that serve meals to the hungry for free or at a reduced charge; as well as regularly scheduled mobile food vans.
- **Targeted Non-Sheltered Outdoor Locations (TNSOLs)** - These are pre-identified sheltered outdoor locations where people live without paying to stay. These homeless arrangements may include: encampments, populations partially sheltered by large man-made structures such as bridges or overpasses, and parking lot camps to name a few.

The 2010 Census Service Based Enumeration operation will be conducted March 29 through March 31, 2010. March 29th, has been designated as the day to enumerate emergency and transitional shelters, and March 30th, is the day to enumerate at soup kitchens and regularly scheduled mobile food vans. On March 31st, census workers will enumerate people at targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations (TNSOLs).

Although the Service-Based Enumeration operation is an important part of the 2010 Census, it should be understood that the results from the SBE operation do not provide homeless population counts, nor do the results provide a count of those who use social services at any geographic level. People enumerated at these locations will be included in the areas' population counts.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I want to close by reaffirming the Census Bureau's commitment to an accurate count in the 2010 Census. A decade of planning has ended and now the count begins. We believe we are prepared to face the challenges I have discussed. The Census Bureau looks forward to working with this subcommittee to make the 2010 Census the most successful ever.