

Remarks at the 2010 Census Data Release

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

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Secretary Gary Locke

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Thank you, Dr. Blank and good morning, everyone!

This is an important day for the American people.

Earlier this morning -- in accordance with the law and in fulfillment of a Constitutional mandate -- I delivered the 2010 Census findings to the President of the United States. This is a ritual that has occurred only 22 other times in American history.

My report to the President included the national and state populations; and apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives based on the official population count of the 2010 Census.

I told the President that the 2010 Census was completed on time and without spending the full amount Congress allotted for the task.

Before we get to the actual numbers, it is important to stress this achievement -- because it demonstrates that government can deliver on a promise on time and under budget.

Before this Census began, experts inside and outside the government predicted that long-standing operational and fiscal problems at the U.S. Census Bureau would doom the 2010 count to cost overruns and diminished participation by the American people.

In 2009, the Commerce Department's own Inspector General, as well as the Government Accountability Office, ranked the 2010 Census as one of the federal government programs most likely to fail.

That did not happen.

Earlier this summer, I joined Dr. Groves to announce the Census Bureau had spent \$1.6 billion less than it was appropriated for 2010 Census operations. Today, with the final accounting completed, I am very pleased to announce that number has grown to \$1.87 billion -- which

represents more than 25 percent of the total Congress allotted in 2010 for spending on the Decennial Census.

At least half of this budgetary accomplishment can be directly attributed to:

- Better management;
- Better productivity among our Census counters; and
- Our successful effort to get more Americans to mail back their census forms, which reduced the number of Census employees we had to hire to go counting door to door.

The other half of the \$1.87 billion is from a reserve fund that we had set aside to deal with operational problems and other unforeseen circumstances that fortunately never arose.

Ultimately, 74 percent of U.S. households returned the Census questionnaire by mail, matching what was achieved in the 2000 Census, and halting a three decade decline in mail back response since 1970.

These are substantial achievements that did not happen by chance.

The senior management at the Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau leadership ran a tight ship.

We demanded accountability, instituted rigorous internal management reforms and constant monitoring; and we made sure that we stretched every taxpayer dollar as far as it could go.

We also revamped our public outreach efforts. Our advertising was more targeted than it had ever been before, with:

- Concentrated advertising in Hard-to-Count areas; and
- Advertising in more languages.

We also set aside resources to rapidly intervene with targeted advertising in markets with lagging response rates.

The impact of this targeting effort was measurable and immediate.

In late March of this past year, the Census Bureau had identified 23 media markets containing a total of 17.7 million households that seriously lagged in response.

After three weeks of more intensive and targeted advertising, low performers were reduced to just 10 markets with 1.6 million households.

Of course, we could not have realized these savings without the American public's impressive participation in the 2010 Census.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all those who returned the questionnaire or took a few minutes to answer the few simple questions from the 600,000 Census workers who followed up with households that did not return a questionnaire.

You have helped us to paint this latest portrait of America, which we will start showing you today.

The 2010 Census has been a priority of mine since my very first day as Commerce Secretary.

In fact, the very first thing I did as secretary, before even setting foot in the Commerce Department building, was to attend a kickoff meeting with 2010 Census national partners.

For the 2010 Census, there were more than 257,000 partner organizations all across the country which joined with the Census Bureau to inform and motivate their communities to participate.

These partners ranged from community groups and non-profit organizations to businesses large and small, and they are represented here today.

They also deserve our heartfelt thanks for their support and commitment.

Much is riding on the results we announce today.

This Census data will determine how more than \$400 billion is allocated every single year, and for the next ten years, to local communities for everything from education, to senior services, to police and roads.

The 2010 Census will also shape the makeup of state legislatures and the U.S. Congress, as Census data will serve as the basis for the redistricting that states will undertake in 2011.

Our business colleagues also benefit enormously from Census data. It provides vital information that they use to identify new markets, to decide where to make major capital investments, and ultimately to create jobs and grow our economy.

Indeed, the Census and other statistics collected by the Census Bureau will serve as a backbone of our economy for years to come.

Again, it's a real pleasure to be here on this important day for our nation.

Now, what you have all been waiting for. If Bob will please rejoin me, we'll get to the news.