



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
CHAIRWOMAN **CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

The Ensuring a Fair and Accurate Census Act

Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Ensuring a Fair and Accurate Census Act was introduced by Oversight and Reform Committee Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney. This bill takes important steps to maintain the operational fidelity and enhance the institutional independence of the Census Bureau and its operations over time.

The Census Bureau is a critical institution in the federal government. Data collected through the census affects the distribution of more than \$1.5 trillion dollars in federal funding, apportionment in the House of Representatives, and public and private sector services across the country.

This bill would support budgetary and operational planning of the Census Bureau:

- Beginning in fiscal year 2027, the Ensuring a Fair and Accurate Census Act would include budget projections of Census Bureau activities over next five years. The budget requests would simultaneously be submitted to the appropriate congressional committees to provide unfiltered transparency into the Bureau's projected needs.
- The Secretary would also biannually submit to Congress the status of all research, testing, and operations that are part of the Census Bureau's comprehensive plan for the decennial census and make the reporting available to the public on the Bureau's website.

The Ensuring a Fair and Accurate Census Act would protect against political interference in the Census Bureau:

- The bill vests operational, statistical, and technical decisions for the decennial census in the Director of the Census.
- The bill provides for a single deputy director of the Census Bureau, to be appointed by the Director. The deputy position will be reserved for a career employee with familiarity with the Census Bureau and experience in relevant fields, including demography, economics, survey methodology, statistics, or data science.

- With limited exceptions, all positions within the Census Bureau would be career position within the civil service. Political appointees would be limited to the position of Director and up to three other positions.
- Beginning with the 2030 Census, the Secretary of Commerce would not be permitted to include any subject, type of information, or question that was not previously submitted to Congress in accordance with current notice requirements.

The Ensuring a Fair and Accurate Census Act also codifies the important role of Advisory Committees:

- The bill would enshrine the authority of the Census Bureau to create advisory committees to provide advice relevant to the mission of the Bureau.
- The bill would codify the existing Census Scientific Advisory Committee and the National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations. The bill would establish a 2030 Census Advisory Committee and a Committee on Statistical Quality Standards.

The bill would ensure that any information to be collected on a future census has been submitted to Congress, thoroughly analyzed and certified by the Census Bureau, and reviewed by the Government Accountability Office (GAO):

- The Commerce Secretary must also submit to Congress a certification stating that any question pertaining to a topic that has not appeared on the previous two decennial censuses has been researched, studied, and tested according to established statistical policies and procedures.
- GAO would then conduct a review of the Census certification.