

SIGN ON LETTER – Federal Register Notice – Comments -2015 National Content Test

February 1, 2015

Ms. Jennifer Jessup
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
U. S. Department of Commerce
Room 6616
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Jessup,

In recognition of the need to ensure a complete count of every person in the United States every ten years through the Decennial Census, *we the undersigned organizations* (see page 2) are writing to submit our comments for the Federal Register Notice by the Commerce Department, Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; 2015 National Content Test.

Specifically, we are writing to express our strong support for the combined race and ethnicity question option the U. S. Census Bureau is testing through the 2015 National Content Test (NCT) for the 2020 Decennial Census. We believe such a change will significantly increase the response rate by Black population respondents of African, African American, Afro-Latino and Caribbean ethnicity and heritage. Further, the proposed form for 2020 Decennial Census with a combined race/ethnicity question creates a fair and equitable way for ALL groups to write in their country of origin if they wish to differentiate in their self-reporting.

The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, *in partnership with the Institute of Caribbean Studies*, has convened its Unity Diaspora Coalition to work together to help ensure the Black population is represented in the planning and execution of the 2020 Decennial Census. The Unity Diaspora Coalition (UDC) is a non-partisan, broad-based coalition of census stakeholders representing national and state-based organizations. Many of the UDC member organizations served as partners to assist the Census Bureau in achieving a successful 2010 Decennial Census that had one of the highest response rates in recent history and many plan to partner with the Census Bureau for the 2020 Decennial Census.

The UDC believes that the combined question option (printed and online) will provide more detailed data that is beneficial for a myriad of critical public and private sector purposes, which are vital to all of the American people in determining such issues as: 1) expanding business development opportunities; 2) providing adequate funding for infrastructure, programs and services in communities across the country (urban and rural); 3) providing accurate data for reapportionment and redistricting of congressional districts by states; and 4) assist in having accurate data for monitoring the enforcement of civil rights laws. Further, we know that the Census Bureau will review this issue at upcoming hearings and respectfully ask that the Bureau include our letter in the official hearing record.

In addition, as the Census Bureau enters the digital age in its effort to stay within federal budget constraints by using an online process for self-response for 2020 census count, it is vitally important that this online process does not leave behind many in our community who do not have access to a computer or a smartphone. We strongly recommend that adequate funds will be in place to ensure the door to door process remains intact to reach hard to count communities.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. Please accept the above written comments on behalf of the Unity Diaspora Coalition member organizations listed below.

Sincerely,

Melanie L. Campbell
*President & CEO, National Coalition on
Black Civic Participation & Convener,
Black Women's Roundtable*

Dr. Claire Nelson
*President & CEO
Institute of Caribbean Studies*

James Hill III
President, International Association of
Black Professional Fire Fighters, IABPFF

Marva Griffiths Herman
Executive Director
Caribbean Heritage Organization



Census 2020 Be Counted!