



NEWS RELEASE

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New Data Confirms Severe Undercount of Latinos in Census 2020

First official estimate of Census 2020 accuracy reveals a 4.99 percent national undercount of Latinos, which is significantly greater than Census 2010

"A 2020 Census that more than tripled the percentage of undercounted Latinos from Census 2010 is completely unacceptable and further demonstrates the dire need for our nation to make fundamental changes in how we count U.S. residents. It is time for a new, modern approach to enhance the census' accuracy."

– NALEO Educational Fund CEO Arturo Vargas

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released the following analysis and statement from CEO Arturo Vargas in response to the U.S. Census Bureau's release of [initial findings](#) from the Post-Enumeration Survey (PES), which revealed a massive undercount of the Latino population in Census 2020:

"A year ago when the first results of the 2020 Census were released, we said [we smelled smoke](#). The PES estimates released today confirm that this census was a five-alarm fire. Regrettably, what we had [suspected](#) about a potential undercount of Latinos has turned out to be true. This highlights the need for major changes in how the Census Bureau conducts the decennial count.

"Data from the 2020 Census have already been used to apportion the U.S. House of Representatives and for redistricting, despite the considerable flaws in the number of Latinos. Unless the numbers are corrected in some fashion, these data will now also guide the distribution of more than \$1.5 trillion in federal funding annually to states and localities based on an incorrect snapshot of our population. The potential misallocation of these resources could have a detrimental effect on our schools, healthcare systems, infrastructure, and programs essential for the future prosperity and well-being of Latino families and all of our nation's residents.

"Accurate census data are also crucial for sound public policy decisions, including how we enforce civil rights protections. With so much at stake, the U.S. Census Bureau must conduct a comprehensive analysis of the impact this undercount has on our nation's second-largest population group and assess options to ameliorate it.

“There is no question that the previous administration’s political interference contributed to the undercount. From former U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross lying to Congress about the administration’s true intentions behind attempting to add a citizenship question, to the administration’s attempts to subvert the Constitution and definition of ‘persons’ under the Fourteenth Amendment, the former administration created an environment that left Latinos and others fearful of responding to the census. Collectively, these chilling factors left the Bureau mired in scandal and setbacks, undermining its mission to count our population fairly and accurately.

“The Census Bureau has a lot of work to do moving forward so that it can rebuild trust with the public and reestablish itself as a premier source of population data. The Bureau must continue to conduct assessments and evaluation to inform its planning for future census data collection programs and surveys — including the American Community Survey (ACS) and Census 2030. By learning from the challenges that confronted Census 2020, we can enhance our understanding of the Latino undercount and modernize the census.

“As the Bureau moves forward with its assessment and evaluation, we encourage it to continue to engage data experts, advocates, and other stakeholders, including those with expertise on the Latino community. The Bureau must also continue keeping stakeholders informed about the obstacles it faced while conducting and evaluating the PES — including any that can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Finally, this undercount further demonstrates the dire need for the Census Bureau to make fundamental changes to how it counts the U.S. population. We can no longer rely on the traditional methods of mailing forms out to households and encouraging the public to respond — and conducting door-to-door interviews with households that do not complete these forms.

“If our country can find a way to pull through a once-in-a-century global pandemic, we can find a way to count all of our residents fairly and accurately. We need to modernize the census with a fresh approach to make the progress needed to reach this important goal.”

Key Findings of the PES Data:

- **Overall PES Data Information**

- The PES is the Census Bureau’s first official estimate of the accuracy of Census 2020. It is a statistical analysis of a survey of the nation’s population. Comparing the PES and Census 2020 data determines who was missed or counted in error in Census 2020.
- The PES data released today reveal that Census 2020 undercounted 4.99 percent of the Latino population — 3.45 percentage points higher than the Census 2010 Latino undercount of 1.54 percent. Moreover, the increase in this undercount is more than threefold from Census 2010.
- For the nation as a whole, the PES found a 1.64 percent overcount of those who identified exclusively as non-Hispanic Whites.

- **PES Net Undercount Information**

- The Census Bureau determines the estimated net undercount of the nation as a whole by examining several components of the enumeration, including erroneous enumerations (such as duplicates) and omissions.
- The net undercount of the Latino population includes an estimated 10.5 percent omissions.
- The PES data released today only provide information about the accuracy of Census 2020 at the national level. The Census Bureau anticipates releasing data for individual states in summer 2022.

- **Youth Undercount Information**

- The PES also reveals that Census 2020 undercounted 2.79 percent of very young children (ages 0–4), which is 2.07 percentage points higher than the Census 2010 undercount of this population group (0.72 percent). The increase in this undercount is more than threefold from Census 2010.
- Given that more than one out of every four American children are Latino, these figures represent a severe undercount of very young Latino children once again.
- While the PES does not provide an estimate specifically for Latino children, we anticipate that further statistical analysis will illuminate the undercount of these children.
 - In 2016, research spearheaded by demographer Dr. William O’Hare found that the [net undercount rate](#) for very young Latino children ages 0–4 was 7.1 percent, compared to 4.3 percent for non-Latinos — with Census 2010 missing nearly 400,000 very young Latino children.

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About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation’s leading non-partisan, non-profit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.