



Legislation Text

File #: 2018-0184, **Version:** 1

Clerk 03/29/2018

A MOTION requesting the executive to develop and transmit an implementation plan for the county to coordinate the efforts for the 2020 Census with a focus on Hard-to-Count communities to ensure a complete and accurate count and participation of all county residents regardless of age, income, race, housing status and citizenship status.

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution requires the census to be conducted every ten years, and

WHEREAS, in addition to apportionment of House of Representative seats, the decennial census is also used for: enforcing voting rights and civil rights legislation; appropriating an estimated \$590 billion in federal funds to local communities from sixteen large census guided programs, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children and Section 8 Housing; and producing and publishing critical data on unemployment, crime, poverty, health and education, and

WHEREAS, according to the George Washington Institute of Public Policy, for Fiscal Year 2015, Washington state received a total of \$13.8 billion or \$1,914 per capita of census guided federal funds, and

WHEREAS, for the 2017-2018 biennium, King County is expected to receive a total of \$8 billion of direct and indirect federal funds and based on the George Washington Institute of Public Policy's figures, an undercount of one percent of the Asian and Hispanic/Latino populations, which compromises a large portion of the Hard-to-Count ("HTC") communities, would result in the loss of \$87.8 million of federal funds to King

County for the next decennial, and

WHEREAS, good census data is fundamental to being a data-driven and equity-driven government and therefore King County relies on census data to help us understand community conditions, develop and implement strategies that are most responsive to communities, and evaluate the effectiveness of our work, and county programs funded by the best start for kids levy, such as Communities of Opportunity, and the veterans, seniors and human services levy use census data to determine distribution of funds to the appropriate communities and also use census data to measure outcomes to ensure effectiveness of programs funded by the levies, and

WHEREAS, Public Health - Seattle & King County, in conjunction with the King County Hospitals for a Healthier Community, rely on the census data as a major data source to establish the biennial King County Community Health Needs Assessment to identify the greatest needs and assets of King County communities and develop plans to address them and the census is also a major component of determining Community Health Indicators, which offers a comprehensive overview of demographics, health and health behaviors among King County residents, and

WHEREAS, current census data may be flawed because it does not provide an accurate count by excluding HTC communities and therefore depriving HTC communities of vital public and private resources due to the undercount, and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Urban Research, City University of New York Graduate Center, HTC communities are defined as those communities at higher risk of not being fully counted in the decennial census. A census tract is considered HTC if its self-response rate in the 2010 decennial census was seventy-three percent or less, or all tracts nationwide that are in the bottom twenty percent of 2010 mail return rates, and

WHEREAS, HTC communities have been historically underrepresented in the decennial census for decades and they include young children, people of color, rural residents, low-income households,

"linguistically isolated" households, frequent movers, foreign born residents, households below the poverty line, overcrowded households, low-educational-attainment households, single-parent-headed households, the homeless population and those people who either distrust government authorities or have been or could be targets of law enforcement or heightened surveillance, or both, and

WHEREAS, it is critical to leverage enumerators and census organizers that reflect the experience and culture of HTC communities to ensure the success of an accurate count, and

WHEREAS, in 2017 the U.S. Census Bureau began ramping up activities to begin the 2020 Census count by focusing on the Local Update of Census Addresses, which would allow local jurisdictions to submit updates by July 2018 to the Master Address File, and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Census Operational Plan's new data-collection methods propose to minimize in-person checks for address canvassing, prioritize online forms for data collection, and maintain the 2010 census approach for collecting data on race and ethnicity, which would create a lot of risk to HTC communities since these would include households with no computer or inadequate Internet access, and

WHEREAS, according to King County's department of information technology, sixteen percent of residents in the county do not have Internet access at home, and residents who earn less than \$50,000 per year are more than five times less likely to have Internet access at home, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Commerce's decision to include collecting data on citizenship for the 2020 Census would deter undocumented immigrants and even documented immigrants from participation and possibly undermine the validity of the next decade of health statistics and programs, which relies on data of all residents regardless of citizenship status, and

WHEREAS, the March 2018 adopted Fiscal Year 2018 federal budget appropriated \$2.8 billion to the Census Bureau, \$1.1 billion more than the Department of Commerce's adjusted request for Fiscal Year 2018. However, based on analysis from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the increase for Fiscal Year 2018 combined with the department's request for \$3.8 billion for Fiscal Year 2019 will still be much lower in

comparison to spending trends of prior decennial census and exacerbate the risk of an undercount, and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the county established the complete count committee to coordinate efforts for 2010 Census. However, focus on engaging the HTC communities were limited, and

WHEREAS, it is critical that King County continue to focus on Local Update of Census Addresses and also begin coordinating efforts now to ensure a complete and accurate count of HTC communities and to strive for the highest level of participation by county residents regardless of age, income, race, housing status and citizenship status;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive is requested to develop and transmit an implementation plan for the county to coordinate efforts for the 2020 Census with a focus on Hard-to-Count ("HTC") communities. The plan shall consider the following:

1. Need for new processes that are inclusive and open, and in particular raise the voices and power of those in the community who have been historically sidelined by those who have traditionally exercised power;

2. Commitment to community partnerships that are equally rooted in the principle that those affected by a decision have the right to be involved in the decision-making process. Therefore, the plan shall be developed in collaboration with stakeholders that reflect the experience and culture of HTC communities to ensure outreach and messaging is culturally competent, translated and interpreted, is provided by the best messengers and incorporates lessons learned from similar census efforts in the past. The executive shall prioritize considering community-based organizations as stakeholders for collaboration since they are poised to facilitate access to decision-making for historically underrepresented communities and provide the expertise needed to remove barriers of race, cultural norms and practices, disability and language, in order to foster full and equitable civic participation;

3. Leverage advances in the work done by the county with HTC communities since the last decennial census, such as the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, Communities of Opportunity, Affordable Care Act

enrollment and the establishment of the King County immigrant and refugee commission; and

4. Solidify existing partnerships and establish new relationships with those stakeholders listed in section C. of this motion.

B. The plan shall also include, but not be limited to:

1. The county's role as convener to engage all county stakeholders listed in section C of this motion to establish the county's "complete count committee" to perform the following:

a. act as liaison to the census bureau, and coordinate with the bureau to apply its authority, knowledge, and techniques to King County communities;

b. align messaging to educate, motivate, and activate respondents;

c. coordinate training and recruiting local, trusted enumerators;

d. employ enumerators and census organizers that reflect the experience and culture of HTC communities;

e. utilize and share county resources including translation tools and services;

f. leverage census bureau and county expertise and technical support; and

g. coordinate resource sharing amongst the stakeholders;

2. Identification of HTC communities in King County;

3. Strategies to focus on engagement and outreach to HTC communities;

4. Identification of gaps and challenges to HTC communities as a result of the new data collection methods, such as minimizing field canvassing, online forms and similar methods, and strategies to resolve the gaps and challenges;

5. Consideration of hiring a temporary full time employee to direct and coordinate the county's efforts to engage HTC communities for the 2020 Census and related county budget implications;

6. Consideration of using county moneys and existing resources to fully implement the plan and related county budget implications, if any;

7. Assessment of risk to undocumented immigrants who participate in the 2020 Census and strategies to minimize such risks;

8. Strategies on advocating the King County's federal legislative delegation on:

a. urging the Department of Commerce to rollback its decision to include the question of citizenship as part of the 2020 Census;

b. including combining the two separate questions on "race" and "ethnicity" into a single "race and ethnicity" question to minimize confusion and provide more accurate data for the Hispanic, Latino and Spanish and the Middle Eastern or North African communities; and

c. affirming the anonymity of the census to protect undocumented residents and ensure they participate;

9. In consultation with the King County prosecuting attorney's office and legal advocacy organizations in the community, identify federal legal strategies to address possible equal protection and civil rights violations for deliberate undercounting of HTC communities from including the question of citizenship to the 2020 Census and limiting federal funding for 2020 Census operations compared to prior decennial census. In addition, identify federal legal strategies to monitor protection of respondents' information and ensure the information remain anonymous, private and secure; and

10. Timeline including major activities and key milestones of the coordination efforts included in the plan.

C. The executive is requested to engage and collaborate with various stakeholders in King County to develop the plan. Stakeholders shall include, but not be limited to, philanthropic organizations, community-based, nonprofit and social organizations, faith-based organizations, school districts, higher education organizations, local jurisdictions including tribal governments, the King County immigrant and refugee commission, the King County civil rights commission, all relevant county departments under the executive's jurisdiction, Public Health - Seattle & King County, the King County Library System, King County regional

committees, the U.S. Census Bureau, businesses and the state of Washington.

D. The executive shall transmit the plan, and a motion approving the plan by September 1, 2018, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy to the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the policy staff director and the lead staff for the committee of the whole, or its successor.