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Governor's Census 2020 Complete Count Commission
PA Department of Community & Economic Development
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Dear Mr. Colón,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony to discuss plans for the 2020 Decennial Census in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) is a statewide, independent, non-partisan and non-profit child advocacy organization that uses research and data as the foundation for its public policy work. We are committed to improving the education, health and well-being of children and youth in the commonwealth. PPC's vision is to make Pennsylvania one of the top 10 states in the nation to be a child and to raise a child. Today, Pennsylvania ranks 17th in child well-being, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's national KIDS COUNT report.

PPC uses census-derived estimates as the basis to guide our decision-making, advocacy efforts, and communication strategies. Our purpose is to level the playing field for children at-risk for later life failure because of their family and/or community conditions including poverty, language, race, ethnicity, disability, abuse, geography and other societal conditions. For over 25 years, our efforts have improved children's health, expanded early learning opportunities, kept children safer in their homes and communities, improved our schools and prepared our high school graduates for success.

The 2010 Census missed nearly one in ten children aged 0-4, or about 2 million children nationwide; the net young child undercount (after accounting for duplications) was nearly 5 percent or almost one million children.ⁱ Young children had by far the worst undercount of any age group. This trend of missing young children has been growing over the last several Decennial Censuses even as our ability to count other age groups has improved.ⁱⁱ

Even worse, the children that are missed most often are children of color.ⁱⁱⁱ Thus, children who are already disproportionately poor, vulnerable and most in need of strong communities and services are likely to get less than their share of federal and state dollars and adequate services in their communities.

Young children are generally undercounted for a plethora of reasons. These include:

- There are 104,000 children under age 5 living in hard-to-count neighborhoods, accounting for 1 in every 6 young children within the commonwealth.^{iv} Of the children under age 5 within the city of Philadelphia, more than 60 percent live in hard-to-count census tracts.^v
- It is widely believed that poor households are difficult to enumerate,^{vi} and young children have a higher poverty rate than any other age group.
- Some young children may go uncounted because they live in large households. In 2010, nearly a quarter of young children lived in households of six or more people.
- Some young children have complicated living arrangements, moving often among various relatives or caregivers. Foster children, children living with grandparents or other relatives, and children whose parents are cohabiting but not married are also more likely to be missed. A recent study found 40 percent of all children under age 5 lived in a household with complex living arrangements.^{vii} The figures are higher for Black children (50 percent) and Latino children (55 percent). Young children in complex households may be left off the Census questionnaires because respondents are uncertain whether to include a young child as a household resident.^{viii}
- Language barriers also contribute to the undercount of young children in households. In 2010, one-quarter of young Latino children lived in a linguistically isolated household where adults had difficulty speaking English.^{ix} It has been shown that language limitations cause respondents to report in error on the census questionnaire.^x

The undercount of young children has several serious consequences for children, and many of those consequences last for at least a decade (for most of their childhood), including:

- less representation in Congress, the state legislature, and school boards for communities with high numbers of young children;
- less federal funding for critical children's programs and particularly in the hard-to-count communities;
- inadequate data and planning information for policymakers and advocates for services such as adequate school capacity and community health services; and
- distorted data in all Census surveys for the next decade, since the Census Bureau uses population data from the Census (the only product which is not a survey but rather an all-population count) and annual population estimates based on the Decennial Census to develop the sampling design and weighting for all its surveys.

Every year, more than \$26 billion in federal funds is allocated to Pennsylvania and its localities based on census data, either directly or through Census population estimates and Census surveys that in turn rely on the Decennial Census.^{xi} **The commonwealth has lost \$44 million in federal funding each year in just five programs due to the young child net undercount in the 2010 Census.**^{xii} Following are some of the programs that affect children's lives for which funding is based in whole or in part on census data. (Unless noted, figures are for fiscal year 2018 that were allocated to Pennsylvania.)^{xiii} Funding allocations for many other, smaller but equally as important children's programs not listed here are also calculated using Decennial Census data.

- \$117,682,000 through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). CCDF helps low-income families who are working, participating in training or education programs, or looking for work afford child care and supports activities that improve the quality of care for all families. In fiscal year 2017, an average of 92,300 children benefited monthly from CCDF in Pennsylvania.^{xiv} State funds are allocated based on numbers of children under 5, numbers under 13, and state median income, so an undercount of young children would reduce Pennsylvania's child care funding.
- \$314,025,000 in Head Start/Early Head Start funding. The Head Start program provides grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, to help children get a strong start in school. In 2017, 44,600 children were served through all Head Start programs in Pennsylvania.^{xv} Head Start expansion funds are allocated based on numbers of poor children, so undercounts of young poor children would result in their communities getting less expansion funding for Head Start and Early Head Start.
- \$644,635,000 in Title 1 grants to local education agencies (LEAs). These grants help LEAs improve teaching and learning in high-poverty schools. During the 2017-18 school year, over 57 percent of Pennsylvania's schools were Title 1 schools.^{xvi} A Decennial Census undercount of children, particularly poor children, in a school district would result in reduced funding for that district.
- \$446,897,000 in special education grants. Through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal government provides grants to states to assist them in ensuring a free public education environment that will allow children with disabilities to thrive. In 2017-18, IDEA part B served more than 320,000 children and students in Pennsylvania.^{xvii} Through IDEA part C, federal funds assist states in providing early intervention services for infants and toddlers (0 – 2) and their families. IDEA part C covered more than 21,000 Pennsylvania infants and toddlers and their families in 2017-18.^{xviii} Because the grants are allocated based on the number of children and poor children in a community, if young children, particularly poor young children, are missed in a school district that state and school district will not get its fair share of IDEA funds.
- \$558,435,000 for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). CHIP provides subsidized health coverage to children in low-income families. The federal government pays most of the costs of the program, and the federal share of the costs varies by state using an enhanced match based on the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP). CHIP covered over 363,000 children in Pennsylvania in fiscal year 2017.^{xix} If many children in poverty are missed in the Census, then the FMAP will be impacted and the share of CHIP reimbursements paid by the federal government will not be accurate for our state's needs.
- \$181,187,000 for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). WIC provided supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education, and referrals to health and social services to more than 237,000 low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants, and children to age five who have been determined to be at nutritional risk in Pennsylvania in fiscal year 2016.^{xx} The American Community Survey, which uses the Decennial Census and annual populations estimates based on the Decennial Census to design its sampling frame, is used to determine each state's fair share target for foods funding. (Grants for supplemental food equal about 70

percent of WIC grants to states.) A young child undercount could result in a lower state fair share target funding for supplemental food.

- \$192,436,000 in Title IV-E Foster Care. The Federal Foster Care Program helps to provide safe and stable out-of-home care for over 16,800 Pennsylvania children until they are safely returned home, permanently placed with adoptive families, or placed in other planned arrangements for permanency.^{xxi} An undercount of young poor children would result in a higher total per capita income in a state, and that in turn would result in a lower FMAP, and thus lower reimbursements for care for children in foster care. That tends to affect the level of services available for children.

Children in lower-income families also benefit from programs that provide financial security for their families and economic development for their communities based on census-derived data:

- \$18,621,112,000 for the Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid). Medicaid is a federal-state program that provides health coverage for people with low incomes. It covers an array of services including prenatal care, well-child visits, developmental screenings, and treatment for illness and disease.^{xxii} Medicaid covered nearly 1,226,000 Pennsylvania children in fiscal year 2017.^{xxiii} The federal government pays for 52.25 percent of the costs of Medicaid in Pennsylvania. The FMAP is the formula by which the federal government's share of a state's Medicaid costs is calculated. A Decennial Census undercount of a state's population would result in a higher Per Capita Income in the FMAP formula and consequently, a lower reimbursement rate.
- \$671,349,000 in Section 8 housing choice vouchers. Section 8 vouchers are the nation's leading source of housing assistance for low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and families with children, helping approximately 2.2 million households nationwide to secure affordable rental housing in the private market.^{xxiv} A local area undercount of children would result in that area receiving fewer housing vouchers, distorted family eligibility standards, and inappropriate rents per unit.

The consequences of an undercount go far beyond the financial. If many young children are missed, school demographers will not know which areas need to build schools or add classrooms for when these children enter school, creating overcrowded classrooms and a lower quality of education for children who live in areas with many uncounted children. Health centers and other medical resources are allocated based on the number of people and poor people in a community, with new centers being built or old ones being closed. An undercount of young children will mean inadequate medical resources in the community. Businesses use Census data for planning where to put new enterprises; if a local community is undercounted, that may result in, for example, no business being willing to start a grocery store there and people having less access to healthy food.

We believe a full, fair, and accurate census must include a count of everyone living in this state, including its youngest members. As advocates that use Census data to assess the well-being of children and identify policy changes, we know that policymakers need reliable, useful, objective data about our commonwealth's people, housing, economy, and communities. A census that counts every person is

required by the Constitution. It is integral to our democracy because it ensures that district lines are fairly drawn and allocated. It is fundamental to the federal government’s formulas for distributing federal assistance to Pennsylvania, our localities, and our families. It is essential to guide important community decisions affecting schools, housing, health care services, business investment, and much more.

A full, fair, and accurate census is critical for our state and our communities. It will shape the lives of our youngest children at the most critical points in their development. For the reasons discussed above, we ask the Complete Count Commission to focus on its communications efforts to implement the best methods for persuading families with young children to complete the Census. The 2019-20 state budget should include, at a minimum, \$1 per Pennsylvania resident, or \$12.8 million to support the creation of a public fund to increase awareness and education around the 2020 Census and increase in-person outreach and assistance with the Census through efforts by the Commonwealth, local governments and community-based organizations.

ⁱ KIDS COUNT Data Book 2018, <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2018kidscountdatabook-2018.pdf>, citing <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/memo-series/2020-report-2010-undercount-children-omissions.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ The Undercount of Young Children, 2014, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2014/demo/2014-undercount-children.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ O’Hare, W.P. (2015). The Undercount of Young Children in the U.S. Decennial Census, Springer Publishers.

^{iv} KIDS COUNT Data Book 2018 <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2018kidscountdatabook-2018.pdf> citing U.S. Census Bureau, 2012–16 American Community Survey.

^v 100 Largest Cities (Places) Ranked by Number of Children Under Age 5 Living in Hard to Count Census Tracts <https://countallkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/100-Largest-Cities-Number-Children-Under-5-HTC-Census-Tracts.pdf>.

^{vi} Fernandez, L., Shattuck, R. and Noon, J. (2018), The Use of Administrative Records and the American Community Survey to Study the Characteristics of Undercounted Young Children in the 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau Center, CARRA Working Paper Series. Working Paper Series #2018 – 05, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

^{vii} Jensen, E. (2017) Presentation at the Children’s Leadership Council – Census Bureau meeting, April 13, 2017, Washington DC.

^{viii} O’Hare, W.P. (2015) The Undercount of Young Children in the U.S. Census, Springer Publishers, Page 95.

^{ix} U.S. Census Bureau (2017). Investigating the 2010 Undercount of Young Children – A Comparison of Demographic, Housing, and Household Characteristics of Children by Age, January 18, 2017.

^x U.S. Census Bureau (2017). Investigating the 2010 Undercount of Young Children – A Comparison of Demographic, Housing, and Household Characteristics of Children by Age, January 18, 2017.

^{xi} Counting for Dollars 2020, The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds

Report #2: Estimating Fiscal Costs of a Census Undercount to States, <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/GWIPP%20Reamer%20Fiscal%20Impacts%20of%20Census%20Undercount%20on%20FMAP-based%20Programs%2003-19-18.pdf>.

^{xii} Consequences of the Young Child Undercount in The 2010 Decennial Census by State <https://countallkids.org/resources/consequences-of-young-child-undercount-by-state/>.

^{xiii} FY 2020 Analytical Perspectives Chapter 17 Aid to State and Local Governments <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/state-by-state-fy2020.xlsx>.

^{xiv} FY 2017 Preliminary Data Table 1 - Average Monthly Adjusted Number of Families and Children Served, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/fy-2017-preliminary-data-table-1>.

^{xv} KIDS COUNT Data Center <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9786-head-start-enrollment-by-age-group#detailed/2/40/true/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/1830,558,559,1831,122/19059>.

^{xvi} Pennsylvania Future Ready Index, Pennsylvania Department of Education <https://futurereadypa.org/>.

^{xvii} “Number of children and students served under IDEA, Part B, by age group and state.” <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html>.

^{xviii} “Number of infants and toddlers ages birth through 2 and 3 and older, and percentage of population, receiving early intervention services under IDEA, Part C, by age and state.” <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html>.

^{xix} Unduplicated Number of Children Ever Enrolled in CHIP and Medicaid, <https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/downloads/fy-2017-childrens-enrollment-report.pdf>.

^{xx} Frequently Asked Questions about WIC, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/frequently-asked-questions-about-wic> and <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wic-program>.

^{xxi} KIDS COUNT Data Center, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6243-children-in-foster-care#detailed/2/40/true/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/any/12987>. This is point-in-time data, and the total number of children served in foster care over the course of a year is higher.

^{xxii} Kayla Patrick, Jasmine Tucker & Amy Matsui, By the Numbers: Data on Key Programs for the Well-Being of Women & Their Families 2 (June 2018), available at <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FINAL-By-The-Numbers.pdf>.

^{xxiii} Unduplicated Number of Children Ever Enrolled in CHIP and Medicaid, <https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/downloads/fy-2017-childrens-enrollment-report.pdf>.

^{xxiv} 2017 Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheet, <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/4-13-11hous-US.pdf>.