

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

*No. 270*

**Approved May 10, 2019**

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution requires every man, woman, and child in America be counted every ten years for purposes of allocating seats in Congress; and

WHEREAS, April 1, 2019 marks one year until the next decennial census of the population must be conducted; and

WHEREAS, In December 2018, the United States Census Bureau ranked Rhode Island's second congressional seat number 388, with only the top 385 districts to be seated; and

WHEREAS, The Providence County Complete Count Committee, led by the City of Providence, worked to promote awareness of and participation in the 2018 End-to-End Census Test; and

WHEREAS, Providence County was selected to serve as the only full-scale, end-to-end test of operations in the country to prepare for the 2020 Census and includes almost 280,000 housing units; and

WHEREAS, An undercount of the population in 2020 will likely result in the loss of fair representation for Rhode Island in the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, The Census will not only be the basis for drawing congressional, state and local voting districts, but also the allocation of \$700 billion dollars in federal funds for the next decade; and

WHEREAS, One third of Rhode Island's state budget, approximately \$3 billion, is comprised of these federal dollars, including funding for police and fire departments, small business owners, housing, healthcare, education, Medicaid, clean water, waste disposal, and other services; and

WHEREAS, The federal government allocated \$157 million to Rhode Island's elementary and secondary schools in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Local jurisdictions across Rhode Island use Census data to determine social and economic characteristics of its populations, funding needs for infrastructure projects, economic development programs, job trainings and other activities; and

WHEREAS, Obtaining a fair and accurate count from both rural and urban communities across Rhode Island has historically proven to be difficult in the 61 Census tracts known to be Hard-to-Count, spanning from north to south and east to west, encompassing such communities as Woonsocket, West Warwick, South Kingstown, and Newport; and

WHEREAS, The late proposal by the Secretary of Commerce to add an untested citizenship question puts the ability to achieve an accurate count at serious risk throughout the United States, leading the American Sociological Association, 6 former Census Bureau Directors from both Republican and Democrat administrations, more than 161 Mayors, and 19 State Attorneys General to all come out publicly against inclusion of a citizenship question; and

WHEREAS, For the first time in United States history the Census Bureau will be launching its survey response through electronic means, creating a risk to communities with limited internet access; and

WHEREAS, The United States Government Accountability Office has sounded the alarm in a series of reports that budget cuts, cyber-security weakness and the ongoing legal battle regarding the citizenship question may impede the accuracy of the agency's critical work; and

WHEREAS, It will take the united action of all Rhode Island towns and cities to ensure a complete and accurate count and, furthermore, it will be vitally important for local governments to support census outreach and education efforts to ensure that every Rhode Islander is counted in the 2020 Census; and

WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Complete Count Committee, ordered by the Governor, shall develop, recommend and assist in the administration of a census outreach strategy to encourage full participation in the 2020 federal decennial census of population.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That Providence City Council recognizes the critical importance of Census 2020 for the future of Rhode Island and encourages all residents to participate in the 2020 Census and to become involved in peer education and outreach.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we support the effort of the Rhode Island Complete Count Committee to raise at least \$1.2 million to build a community outreach campaign to ensure that all of Rhode Island is counted in 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the Co-Chairs of Rhode Island Complete Count Committee, the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the President of the Senate.

**IN CITY COUNCIL**

READ AND PASSED

*Sakina Mats*  
PRES.

*Sam Selbet*  
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

*[Signature]*  
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Mayor  
Date: *5/10/19*