

Dear friends,

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights asks that you please join us in requesting a suspension of immigration enforcement activities in order to maximize immigrant community participation in the upcoming Census. During the middle of March, households will receive in their mail the census form to complete, with April 1 the target date for returning forms.

We plan to release this letter [see below] to President Obama and Secretary Napolitano of the DHS, on Mar. 9. We are asking for organizational endorsements at this time, which should be sent by the end of the day on Friday, March 5.

Numerous organizations have also requested such a suspension, but the Administration and DHS have thus far not indicated that they will take any steps. In the past two census periods, during 1990 and 2000, many operations were suspended for specific periods.

While we will also be working to address community concerns about the confidentiality of the census process and to generally raise awareness of its importance for our communities, we believe a suspension of enforcement activities will be important to encourage immigrant households to return their census forms.

If your organization can sign onto this letter, please reply to ctactaquin@nnirr.org with:

- **The organization's name, as it should be listed, and city/state**
- **Name of contact person**
- **Email address for contact person**

We will only be listing the organization and city/state. The letter will be posted later for individual endorsements.

Thank you for your support.

President Barack Obama

The White House

Washington, D.C.

Secretary Janet Napolitano

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, D.C.

Dear President Obama and Secretary Napolitano:

We write on behalf of the organizations signing this letter, to respectfully request that all enforcement activities and operations engaged in by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and impacting non-citizens be completely and immediately suspended for the rest of the year in order to encourage a more inclusive count of this country's population during Census 2010. We are concerned that a climate of fear and distrust within immigrant communities due to immigration raids and other enforcement actions will deter immigrant households from returning the Census surveys and from cooperating in further Census outreach efforts.

Immigrant-based communities are among several known to be significantly undercounted by the Census; in New York City, heavily-immigrant areas have had less than a 40 percent census response rate, compared to the citywide average response of 65 percent. Numerous officials have themselves expressed grave concerns about the challenges faced in convincing immigrants to participate due to persistent enforcement activity by the same government now seeking their

information. Immigrants have raised doubts about the confidentiality of the Census. While officials have repeatedly stated that the information obtained will not be shared with other departments, immigrants well recall similar assurances about the Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service; today, the data obtained from these agencies has provided the fuel for many of this Administration's enforcement operations.

Because of these challenges and the severe, long-term consequences of an undercount, we urge you to follow precedent and suspend enforcement activities.

For the 2000 Census, former Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner Doris Meissner recalls that "we definitely went further than what I'm hearing from this administration thus far". The decision then was to make clear that "while her agency would continue to do serious criminal enforcement, other routine operations and enforcement activities would be suspended. During the 1990 Census, Rep. Silvestre Reyes, then working for the Border Patrol, recalls "when the orders came down to suspend some enforcement efforts." In preparation for this year's Census, the Census Bureau leadership, in 2007, had urged that immigration enforcement raids be suspended. Under this Administration, the Census Bureau has reversed its position and stated last October that they have declined to ask the DHS to suspend raids during the 2010 Census.

We would like to make clear that our current request is not limited to raids and sweeps, whether in the interior or border communities. As you know, enforcement activities have reached an unprecedented breadth and depth, resulting in higher numbers of detentions and deportations than even the past Administration, and utilizing strategies that are less visible than raids but well known and feared in immigrant communities throughout the country. Therefore, our request includes suspension of:

- E-verify employment verification program and audits;
- 287g agreements;
- Detentions of individuals, including long-time lawful permanent residents, on civil immigration charges;
- ICE programs -- such as Secure Communities and the Criminal Alien Program;
- Operation Streamline;
- Absconder arrest programs;
- Operation Return to Sender;
- Operation Community Shield;
- National Fugitive Operations Program;
- Issuance of Social Security no-match letters;

- Operation Cross Check;
- Operation Predator;
- Workplace, home and business raids.

Given the immediacy of the Census 2010 process, we reiterate our request for an immediate suspension of these operations to encourage maximum participation of immigrant community members, widely acknowledged among the Census' "hard-to-count" population targets.

We look forward to your response and public statements on this matter.

Sincerely,

Organizations