

News for Immediate Release

Jan. 27, 2010

Governor Rendell Enlists Franco Harris, Actress Ana Ortiz, Local Leaders to Help PA Ensure Complete, Accurate 2010 Census Count

Outlines Importance of Participation on Federal Funding, Elected Representation Decisions

Harrisburg – With more than \$4 trillion in federal funding at stake over the next decade, Governor Edward G. Rendell today said it is essential for every Pennsylvania resident to answer the 2010 U.S. Census.

To ensure the most accurate count possible, the Governor today established a statewide advisory panel that will work with local “complete count committees” in communities across Pennsylvania. The Governor named Pittsburgh Steelers legend Franco Harris and actress Ana Ortiz of television’s “Ugly Betty” to co-chair the panel.

“Each year, more than \$400 billion in federal funds are allocated based in all or in part on the results of the Census,” Governor Rendell said. “That’s more than \$4 trillion over a 10-year period for critical things like schools, senior centers, job training centers, bridges, highways, public transit, and local emergency response services and training – a larger amount than many people realize.”

The Governor said Pennsylvania cannot afford for any resident to skip participating in the Census, which involves answering only 10 questions and takes just 10 minutes to complete.

“According to the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, Pennsylvania’s population in the 2000 Census was undercounted by 102,000 people. That’s the equivalent of missing the cities of Altoona and Lancaster combined, or failing to count the entire city of Erie. We cannot let that happen again; there is too much at stake.”

As an example, the Governor said that state and public transportation providers receive a combined \$330 million from the federal government for public transit, and the funding formula is based to a significant degree on the state’s population count. If Pennsylvania is undercounted, it will receive fewer dollars for transit.

For counties and local governments, hundreds of millions of dollars in liquid fuels funds are distributed based on the number of highway miles in a jurisdiction and the local population. Nearly \$320 million was distributed to local governments last year.

“Beyond setting funding levels, Census results also play a role in determining how legislative districts are drawn and how many representatives Pennsylvania will have in the U.S. Congress,” Governor Rendell said. “Some have suggested that Pennsylvania is at risk of losing a Congressional seat, but I am not ready to agree to that. If every resident is counted, I think that we will keep all our representatives.”

A priority for the Governor’s Census 2010 Advisory Panel will be to reach out to people who do not typically participate in the Census. In order to communicate with these hard-to-reach populations, the panel will rely on already established relationships of community leaders. These complete count committees are comprised of people, groups and agencies that local residents know and trust.

The panel will supplement the work done by more than 20 state agencies and commissions during the past few months determining how Pennsylvania can aid the U.S. Census Bureau's efforts.

Additionally, the Governor said the state and the Census Bureau want to assure residents that the process is safe and the information collected is confidential.

"Filling out the form will not increase your chances of getting called for jury duty; it will not mean that immigration agents will show up at your door; and no one will come looking for you for unpaid parking tickets," the Governor said. "In fact, the Census asks for less personal information than does a typical credit card application. The bottom line is that answering the 10 questions on the Census form is completely safe as well as something that is good for your community."

The form comes with a postage-paid envelope. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, participating via mail is the most cost-effective way to administer the national count; for every one percent increase in the response rate via mail, the bureau saves between \$80 million and \$90 million by avoiding the need to send census workers to obtain information in person.

The Census Bureau will start mailing out forms in mid-March, so residents should expect to receive one in just a few weeks. April 1 is "National Census Day" and the advisory panel will focus their efforts on getting residents to mail back their completed Census forms on that day.

For more information, visit 2010.census.gov.

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Editor's note: The following is a list of advisory panel members as of Jan. 27.

Ana Ortiz & Franco Harris, co-chairs

Nilda Ruiz, Chief Executive Officer
Asociacion Puertorriquenos en Marcha Inc., Philadelphia

S. Mary Scullion, Executive Director
Homeless Outreach Coordination Center, Philadelphia

Nick Torres
Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Philadelphia

Betsy Huber, Master
Pennsylvania State Grange, Lemoyne

Tony Ross, Director
United Way of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg

Kimberly Roberts
PA Association of Individuals with Disabilities, Johnstown

Marwan Kreidie
Philadelphia Arab-American CDC, Philadelphia

Susan Copella, Director
PA State Data Center, State College PA

Rich Hudic, CEO
Team PA Foundation, Harrisburg

Susan Moore, Executive Director
Community Action Association of PA, Harrisburg

Ed Christiano, ED – Housing Authority of Northumberland Co.
President, PA Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies

Ismael Arcelay
PA Human Relations Commission
Special Asst to Mayor of Allentown

Karla Porter, Director
Workforce Development & Human Resources
Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry

Sherman Wooden
Center for Anti-Slavery Studies, Montrose

Terrence Fitzpatrick, Director
PA Energy Association, Harrisburg

Carolyn Scanlan
Hospital Association of PA, Harrisburg

Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Director for Public Advocacy
PA Council of Churches, Harrisburg

Dr. Robert J. O'Hara Jr.
Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, Harrisburg

Hank Butler
PA Jewish Coalition, Harrisburg

Rev. Brenda Alton
Special Asst to Mayor, City of Harrisburg
President, Greater Harrisburg Ministers Conference

Brian Roberts, Chairman/CEO
Comcast, Philadelphia

Floyd W. Warner, President
PA Chamber of Business & Industry, Harrisburg

Dave Patti, President/CEO
PA Business Council

David DeCampli, President
PPL Electric Utilities

John Walsh, COO
UGI Utilities Penn Natural Gas

Denis O'Brien, President/CEO
PECO

Rodney L. Dickens, President
Allegheny Power

Deborah Musselman, Director of Government Affairs
PA Newspaper Association, Harrisburg

Don Siegel, President – District 3
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Eileen Connelly, President
Service Employees International Union – Pa State Council

Bill George
PA AFL CIO, Harrisburg

Dr. John C. Cavanaugh, Chancellor
PA State System of Higher Education

Don Francis, President
PA Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

William Ruud (President, Shippensburg University)
President, PA Association of Colleges and Universities

U. S. Senator Bob Casey

U.S. Senator Arlen Specter

Hon. Michael Nutter, Mayor
City of Philadelphia

Hon. Luke Ravenstahl, Mayor
City of Pittsburgh

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