

My name is Omari Shakur, a lifelong resident of the City of Newburgh, and leader of Nu V.O.T.E.R.S. Movement. I have brought a group of young people here tonight who are committed and dedicated to fixing and working in their community.

I witnessed the last Census process in our community and realized that most of the people working on Census didn't live in the community. I had to assist one lady in my area to show her which houses were lived in and which weren't, who had moved and who hadn't moved.

I realized recently, during this process, that my city is being undercounted. And, if we are undercounted we are likely being underrepresented and not getting the federal monies appropriate for the population of our city. This is why I am here tonight, to make sure that during this next Census count, that we have people hired from our city and our community so we can get a much more complete count. That can only come from reaching out to community organizations like mine that are already doing the work, that are on the ground every day and know the layout and residents of our city. That's the best way to connect with the community, hire from the community and make sure the message gets out. But, the Governor needs to include funding for Census education and outreach in the state budget now. Right now we need to get on the ground and start getting people ready for this. Really, we needed to start yesterday in order to get a complete count of our community next year.

I urge you to send a message to Governor Cuomo to fund Census outreach and education in the state budget now.

I'd like to thank everyone for taking the time to listen tonight.