

Hello, and thank you for inviting me to speak to you today about the 2020 census.

My name is Phyllis Hartmann. I live in Bellport, and I am here as the lead volunteer in Suffolk County for Bend the Arc. Bend the Arc is a national organization composed of progressive Jews who are working together to achieve our vision to transform our country to be inclusive, equitable, and actively supportive of the dignity of every person and of all communities impacted by structural inequality. We work on the pressing domestic issues of our time, and we believe in working in partnership with communities who are directly impacted by injustice.

Next week Jews will be celebrating the Passover holiday that tells the story of our exodus from Egypt after being held in bondage. This story **reminds us that none of us are free until all of us are free**. This year, the connection to immigrant justice couldn't be clearer.

In New York, that means fighting alongside immigrant communities, so that they do not have to live in the shadows, but will be given the dignity that all residents deserve - specifically, to be seen and counted in the 2020 census as required by our Constitution.

However, we know that even in the best of times, NY is one of the most notoriously hard-to-count populations. Unfortunately, we are not in the best of times when it comes to our immigrant neighbors. We will face an extraordinarily difficult time if there is a citizenship question on the census form; but even if that question is removed, the current climate around immigration issues has eroded immigrants faith in our government institutions. Moreover, this year we will be using a new on-line census form, which so far, has been shown to be less effective than predicted in reaching goal response rates.

Compared to the 2010 census that resulted in undercounted populations, the 2020 census has the potential to do real harm to our

state. We stand to lose representation in Congress and federal funds for education, infrastructure, health and other public programs.

To avoid this situation, NY needs much more than the \$20 million allocated. Why? Because the self-response phase will probably not result in the response rates projected and thus will require more door-to-door counts, and these counts have even lower response rates. If we are going to overcome all of these barriers, State funding is needed now to support local and community-based organizations who can provide robust, trusted and effective outreach, especially for hard-to reach populations. Such funding could support educational public forums, in-person discussions and even one-on-one sessions with people in their native languages.

In summary, at Bend the Arc New York, our values compel us to support our local community-based organizations, especially those working with immigrant communities. They will be critical to achieving our shared goal of counting everyone in 2020.

Thank you.

Phyllis Hartmann
Bend the Arc

Lead Volunteer Suffolk County

Bellport, NY 11713
631-793-6095