

I am Meghan Maloney de Zaldivar with the New York Immigration Coalition and am also a member of New York Counts 2020. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the 2020 census and how we can work together to ensure that we have an accurate count of all communities in WNY.

I am disappointed that the State budget allocated only \$20 million for the census, with no specific amount set aside for community-based organizations (CBOs). \$20 million is not nearly enough funding to conduct basic outreach in hard-to-count communities and shows that New York is not taking seriously the threat of an undercount. We are also concerned here in WNY that the bulk of that funding will go downstate, leaving our already under resourced communities with very little funds to cover a vast geographic area with incredibly diverse communities. I ask that this commission work with the Governor and Legislature to allocate an additional \$20 million. Whether through the Empire State Development Corporation or through other avenues of funding, more is needed.

An undercount jeopardizes the over \$73 billion dollars New York State receives annually across 55 federal programs funded through census data. These vital programs include Medicaid, Medicare Part B, Highway Planning and Construction, and SNAP. New York's political power is also on the line as we are already estimated to lose two seats in the House of Representatives, and could lose more if there is a significant undercount.

Upstate cities, especially Buffalo, have changed vastly over the past 10 years. In great part thanks to the new immigrants and refugees, we have made strides to reverse the population decline that has plagued our city for decades. In order to truly show who Buffalians are today and how many of us there are, New York State must ensure that immigrant and refugee communities are accurately counted and therefore safeguard adequate funding for the next 10 years. With the overall culture of fear and distrust in the federal government, this is not a small task and it is not one that government can do by itself. Unfortunately, regardless of what the

Supreme Court rules as to the legality of having a citizenship question on the census, much of the damage has already been done.

New York State must fund community based organizations that have the trust and the relationships in the hard to count communities. The additional challenges of the census being online and language and literacy barriers, makes it particularly important to fund CBOs. CBOs are already on the ground, have the language and cultural competency needed to reach our diverse populations, and the earned trust that comes with years and decades of working within communities. \$40 million dollars would allow CBOs to do “basic outreach” consisting of public forums, providing information to people who came to a CBO, and direct outreach.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to continuing to work together to ensure every New Yorker’s right to be counted.

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