

New York State Complete Count Commission Hearing

April 12, 2019

Long Island Civic Engagement

Table

My name is Rodman Serrano, I'm the Field Coordinator for the Long Island Civic Engagement Table, and I was raised on Long Island by both my parents since I was 7 years old.

The mission of our nonprofit organization is to increase civic participation in immigrant communities and communities of color on Long Island, and it is to ensure that these communities have a strong voice in the political process and that they receive the resources and representation that they deserve.

This is why we care deeply about making sure every Long Islander gets counted in the 2020 census. And we urge you to prioritize resources for census outreach and education.

Members of the commission, we are less than one year away from Census Day on April 1st, 2020. With a potential citizenship question that will be included on the census, the failure of the federal government to adequately prepare, and the move to a mainly online census, this one will be especially challenging.

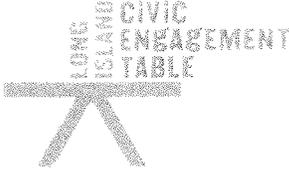
Our organization and our member organizations, which represent and serve members of the Latino, Black, immigrant and low-income communities in Nassau and Suffolk counties, are committed to ensuring our Long Island communities participate in the 2020 census. We're prepared to the on-the-ground work by knocking on doors, canvassing transit hubs and wherever there are lots of people. This is work that we do every year in communities that have been historically undercounted by the census.

In order for the work that we all do to be successful, we need our elected officials and New York State to take leadership in this very important issue. We applaud the governor including \$20 million for census outreach, this is, however, not enough.

To overcome the many challenges of this year's census, and to ensure local and trusted organizations are reaching communities that have been undercounted, we must prioritize investing and expediting more funding.

As a Long Islander, I care deeply about my community here. This is where I was raised, this is where I went to school in Brentwood and where my family lives. Our communities are worth the investment. Let's take serious efforts to insure our Long Island communities get counted in the 2020 census.

The Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) recently released a report that detailed the resources community-based groups would need to maximize participation in the 2020 Census among "hard to count" residents across



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the state. After surveying community groups across our state, they calculated that it would take \$40 million in this year's state budget for community-based organizations to do sufficient outreach around the 2020 Census. The FPI report (linked here) noted that community-group based outreach funding must be in addition to whatever funds the state needs to do its own outreach, media campaigns and funding to local governments.

Sincerely,
Rodman Serrano
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