

**Catherine Borgia**Legislator, 9<sup>th</sup> District

Chair, Budget and Appropriations Committee



Committee Assignments  
Appointments  
Environment, Health & Energy  
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Labor & Housing

**Oral Testimony for New York State Complete Count Commission Public Hearing  
July 25, 2019  
White Plains, NY**

Good evening, my name is Caleb Hersh, addressing the commission on behalf of Westchester County Legislator Catherine Borgia. Legislator Borgia represents a district that includes the Town and Village of Ossining, the Village of Croton, and parts of the City of Peekskill, the Town of Cortlandt, and the Village of Briarcliff Manor.

Legislator Borgia's district was supposed to have 58,516 people in it as of 2010, according to the Westchester County charter. In reality, when we last counted everyone nine years ago, we know that number was likely higher. Census tracts in parts of Ossining, Cortlandt, and Peekskill that Legislator Borgia represents have historically been undercounted. By the Census Bureau's own data, nearly one in five people in our district lived in a census tract with an initial response rate in 2010 of less than 75%. It's cruelly ironic that many of the places that need the most public assistance are also the most undercounted. This impairs the ability of already struggling communities to get critical aid. Many residents in our district struggle with poverty and lack of internet access, making it difficult for them to obtain critical census information. Many of our residents are immigrants. The understandable fear of government faced by many in light of the federal immigration crackdown virtually guarantees an undercount of immigrant residents in our district, even without a citizenship question.

This past year, New York has chosen to lead in many areas of policy where the federal government has not. Now must be one of those times. Any additional resources---material, personnel, intellectual---that the state Complete Count Commission can provide to Westchester County and to its municipalities, will go to good use. Almost a trillion dollars in funding, as well as the guarantee of political representation itself, depend on everyone getting counted. Fifty eight thousand people in District 9, and almost certainly more, are constitutionally entitled to a voice through our census. Please see to it that we are heard. Thank you.