

RESOLUTION NO. .

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU TO PROVIDE CENSUS 2020 PAPER QUESTIONNAIRES FOR LANGUAGE GROUPS BESIDES ENGLISH AND SPANISH THAT ARE SPOKEN BY 100,000 OR MORE UNITED STATES RESIDENTS, INCLUDING CHINESE, TAGALOG AND RUSSIAN

RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, that

WHEREAS, the decennial Census is one of the cornerstones of America’s democracy, and a full and complete count is crucial to ensuring accurate political representation and an equitable distribution of federal and other resources; and

WHEREAS, inadequate language support services will lead to decreased response rates and incomplete and inaccurate responses in Hard-to-Count and Limited English Proficient populations; and

WHEREAS, although the United States Census Bureau plans for the 2020 Census to include the online questionnaire and telephonic support in twelve non-English languages, the agency has also decided to eliminate printed questionnaires in a number of languages spoken by large numbers of residents of the United States, including Chinese, Tagalog and Russian, disproportionately impacting low-income, Limited English Proficient population communities with limited access to the internet; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau chose to eliminate printed non-English Census 2020 questionnaires, with the exception of Spanish, despite the agency having already tested such questionnaires, and despite the agency having testified at the House Oversight Committee that there remains \$1.2 billion in unspent funds allocated for Census 2020 Questionnaire Assistance Centers; and

WHEREAS, it is notable that this elimination of non-English questionnaires is a departure from past practice, as the U.S. Census Bureau provided paper copies of the Census 2010 questionnaire in English and, by request, in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Russian; and

WHEREAS, the elimination of non-English printed questionnaires will result in a disproportionate and adverse impact in California, where 27% of the population is born outside the United States; and

WHEREAS, this adverse impact will be felt acutely in the Bay Area, where residents speak over 160 different languages, resulting in a likely undercount of Limited English Proficient population and Hard-to-Count populations and the loss of Congressional representation, billions of dollars in federal funding, and access to services and civil rights protections, as well as the distortion of electoral districts and undermining of our democracy; and

WHEREAS, in San Mateo County, 46% of our 721,160 residents over the age of 5 speak a language other than English at home; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors urges the United States Census Bureau to provide Census 2020 paper questionnaires for languages besides English and Spanish that are spoken by 100,000 or more in the United States residents, including Chinese, Tagalog and Russian.

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