



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on November 16, 2009

2010 Census Mired in Controversy

Households nationwide will begin to receive their 2010 federal census surveys in the mail in March. The U.S. Constitution (Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3) established the census to be taken every decade to determine Congressional representation and direct taxation. The official web page for the 2010 Census says that filling out these forms is important not only for Constitutional reasons, but also because \$400 billion in federal funding to states for a myriad of unconstitutional programs depends on the numbers generated.



There is only one form for the upcoming census, though a bilingual version will be mailed to areas with high concentrations of Spanish-speaking residents. Respondents will be asked questions about each person in the household as of "Census Day," April 1, 2010. They will also be asked to mail their surveys back in postage-paid envelopes provided or to expect a possible visit from a census worker who will manually tabulate the information. The [USA Today](#) reported recently the Census Bureau only expects a 64 percent response rate to the initial mailing and it will cost taxpayers an extra \$3 billion for census takers to canvas the other 36 percent.

There are 10 questions on the census form. The first two ask how many people live at a particular residence as of Census Day, which is, incidentally, the only information on the form actually required by the U.S. Constitution. The third question asks about the particular type of residence and ownership to determine national economic data and facilitate unconstitutional housing programs. The fourth question asks for the respondent's telephone number in case census takers have questions about answers on the form. The last six questions must be answered individually for each person living at the residence. These data include complete name, sex, age and date of birth, ethnicity, race, and whether the person has more than one home. The Census Bureau claims it needs this additional information to ensure accuracy and to forecast, implement, and monitor government policies and programs.

It seems the decennial census is always surrounded by controversy, and never more so than now. The Constitution only requires a simple count of residents in each state, not disclosure of personal information. With identity theft rampant, people worry their information will not be kept confidential despite federal law protecting privacy and ensuring only statistical tabulations are disseminated. However, concerns reached a fever pitch in October when the U.S. Government Accountability Office released a [report](#) admitting that fingerprinting flaws made it "possible that more than 200 people with unclassifiable prints had disqualifying criminal records but still worked, and had contact with the public during address canvassing." The Bureau had already weathered much negative publicity over its ties with ACORN as a partner program causing Census Director Robert Groves to [terminate the partnership agreement](#) in September.

Census controversy also springs from the fear of fraud as both federal representation and funding are at stake. There is angst over states greedy for that federal funding using taxpayer's money to launch



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advertising campaigns encouraging residents to respond. The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) reports that due to budget cuts, California is drastically reducing funding for its census outreach program and stands to lose as much as \$1,000 per uncounted resident as a result.

Since census numbers affecting federal funds include non-citizens, some call for a question about U.S. citizenship to be included on the 2010 survey. However, the Senate rejected Senator David Vitter's (R-La.) recent attempt to do so. "I am disappointed that my colleagues in the Senate chose to block this [common sense amendment](#) that could prevent Louisiana and several other states from losing a congressional seat," Vitter lamented in a press release. Meanwhile, the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders (CONLAMIC) is calling for a [2010 census boycott](#) unless Congress enacts radical immigration legislation to allow "legalization before enumeration." CONLAMIC accuses the census of using "descent (sic) and honest latino undocumented immigrant(s)... for political and economic purposes," and then urging them "to return to the shadows of discrimination and racial intolerance."



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