

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 31, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO JOHN D. PODESTA

From: Karen A. Tramontano ✓  
Bruce Reed  
Thurgood Marshall

Subject: 2000 Census

As you know, the Census Bureau and Commerce Department have an aggressive outreach strategy to count everyone for this census. The Census Bureau has opened 520 local offices, is in the process of hiring over 800,000 workers, and has launched an unprecedented print media campaign in partnership with numerous non-profits.

Secretary Daley has asked that the White House help launch the census and use our "bully pulpit" to highlight the importance of the census. The message about the census is threefold: the census is important to our everyday lives; it is a civic ceremony in which everyone is asked to participate; and it is the way we, as a nation, come to know our selves and our communities.

There are three message opportunities we will recommend to the President.

First, during the February Congressional recess, Secretary Daley and Director Prewitt will be participating in "Census in the Schools" events. "Census in the Schools" is a program we initiated last year, and it has broad support in Congress. Our plan is to have members of Congress lead class discussions to highlight the importance of the census. We will ask Cabinet and subcabinet members to join -- or to hold their own events in classrooms across the country.

We propose that the President lead similar discussions in a classroom in the District of Columbia. Secretary Daley, Director Prewitt, the D.C. Superintendent of Schools and Eleanor Holmes Norton could join. As you know, there was a sizable undercount in the District, and nationwide among African-Americans. The President's participation in this event would send a very clear signal that the Census is a priority -- and would gratify our Democratic allies. The Vice President, First Lady and Mrs. Gore may also be interested in similar events. (You should know too that Governor George Bush has in the past expressed opposition to sampling).

*As part of the "Census in the Schools" events, Daley would also like you to hold a Cabinet briefing. Your briefing could take place anytime in February and would take no more than half an hour. You would hold the briefing even if the President were unable to do an event.*

The second important date is March 15. On that date, the Census Bureau will be mailing forms to 240 million Americans. During March, we recommend the President dedicate a radio address or make a public statement to urge the American people to fill out their census forms.

Third, by April 1 (Census Day) the Census Bureau will have a sense of the national response rate. If the news is promising, the President could highlight it; if it is not, he could issue a call to action -- particularly if he has not already done a radio address on the issue.

As you know, there is a great deal at stake in having an accurate and timely census. We will put in scheduling requests for Presidential events, and will circulate this memo. In the immediate term, we need to know whether you are willing to hold a Cabinet briefing in February.

Cabinet Briefing:        \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                    \_\_\_\_\_ No

February 8, 2000

To: Karen Tramontano  
From: Irene Bueno  
Robin Bachman, Census  
CC: Eric Liu  
RE: CENSUS/LULAC SPEECH - RECOMMENDATIONS

As you requested, we considered possible Presidential announcements for the speech to the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and recommend that the President: (1) make a strong statement about the confidentiality of the Census; (2) announce the Census in the Schools Challenge; (3) give a status report on federal efforts to support Census 2000; (4) and direct federal agencies to encourage grantees to partner with the Census.

We do not recommend that the President announce the INS guidance. First, the guidance is not ready to be released until later next week. Second, it is not a clear "winner" of an announcement. Some may take the INS guidance to mean the President does not want to enforce immigration laws. Others may think the guidance does not go far enough, because it does not provide a blanket enforcement moratorium during the entire Census period. (Instead, it directs INS field offices to not undertake high visibility enforcement activities during the peak Census period.)

Below are more details about the announcements we recommend.

1. Strong Confidentiality Message – The President should make a strong, clear and unequivocal statement that census information will not be shared with anyone – not federal enforcement agencies, credit bureaus, or any government entity. This will help allay one of the key concerns of groups like LULAC. Also, Census may be prepared to release three PSAs featuring Texas Ranger catcher Pudge Rodriguez in which he encourages participation in the Census and emphasizes that Census information is confidential. The PSAs with Pudge Rodriguez could be played at the speech and he could be invited to attend the speech.
2. Census in the Schools Challenge – The President could announce the **Census in the Schools Challenge** that will involve teachers, Cabinet Secretaries, Congressional members and others all over the country participating in **Census in the Schools Week** beginning February 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - a. Proclamation – The President could issue a proclamation designating February 21, 2000 as "Census in the Schools" week.

b. White House Web Page – The President could announce the White House Webpage will include a link to Census Bureau's **Census in the Schools** teaching materials. Over 85,000 teachers have requested these materials and there has been a slight backlog but the links to these materials will get teaching materials out to teachers more quickly.

3. Federal Agencies Activities in Support the Census – The President could announce some of the activities that federal agencies are undertaking to support the Census in response to his Executive Memorandum from last year. For example, the Social Security Administration (SSA) plans to mail out reminders with Social Security checks. Also, USDA just released a waiver to allow food stamp recipients to continue receiving food stamps if they are hired as census enumerators.
4. Census Partnerships with Corporations, NGA and others – The President could highlight the many partnerships that Census Bureau has with state, local and tribal governments, Fortune 500 corporations and community organizations such as LULAC to help with the Census 2000. In addition, the President could direct federal agencies to encourage their grantees to partner with the Census. These partnerships would expand on other Census outreach efforts to heighten public awareness and participation.