

**FUNDERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION**
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**UNITED PHILANTHROPY
FORUM**

A network for the common good

September 29, 2023

Ms. Shana J. Banks
Chief

Advisory Committee Branch, Office of Program, Performance and Stakeholder Integration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

Submitted via email: Census.2030.Advisory.Committee@census.gov

RE: 2030 Census Advisory Committee Nomination

Dear Ms. Banks,

We write in response to the August 25, 2023 Notice in the *Federal Register* soliciting nominations for the 2030 Census Advisory Committee (the “2030 Committee”). We applaud the Census Bureau for creating the 2030 Committee to ensure a strong avenue of input from stakeholders into planning and operations for the decennial. We believe the 2020 Census suffered from the lack of a dedicated decennial advisory committee and from the lack of a philanthropic perspective on its National Advisory Council. We appreciate the opportunity to share why it is important for philanthropy to be represented on the 2030 Committee and to nominate several individuals who have the necessary expertise and relationships within our organizations to represent the perspectives of the philanthropic sector.

The Census Equity Initiative (CEI) is a philanthropic collaborative of hundreds of funders that came together to spearhead a nationwide campaign to ensure a fair and accurate 2020 Census, particularly in historically undercounted communities, and continues its work looking towards the 2030 Census. The grantmakers that participate in CEI, large and small, come from across the country, giving hundreds of millions of dollars each year to advance the common good and improve the quality of life in the United States. These foundations have different funding priorities, are ideologically diverse, and do not always agree with each other. But we share a common interest in a fair and accurate census, eliminating the persistent, disproportionate undercount of certain population groups, and providing access to demographic data, particularly data that can address equity issues. CEI is steered by a committee of some of the nation’s most prominent national and regional foundations: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Heartland Foundation, Joyce Foundation, The JPB Foundation, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Unbound Philanthropy, Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (Note: These comments are being submitted on behalf of the CEI as a whole and not on behalf of any of the individual members noted here.)

The Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP), an active part of the philanthropic collaborative, is a network of grantmakers who share an underlying conviction that all people deserve a voice in our democratic process. FCCP works to dismantle unjust systems and structures, and shift power to communities that have long fought for inclusion. FCCP’s commitment to racial justice and to achieving a

democracy where all communities are counted, resourced, and represented necessitates our deep engagement on the American Community Survey (ACS) and census. Through outreach, education, and mobilization, its Funders' Committee Census Initiative (FCCI) engages philanthropy, with a particular focus on state and local funders, to leverage their resources and power in support of a fair and accurate count.

As a key part of the philanthropic collaborative and the largest and most diverse network in American philanthropy, United Philanthropy Forum (Forum) holds a unique position in the social sector to help increase philanthropy's impact in communities across the country. The Forum is a membership network of nearly 100 regional and national philanthropy-serving organizations (PSOs), representing more than 7,000 funders who work to make philanthropy better. The Forum's work helps promote a strong philanthropic sector while advocating for vibrant, healthy communities by identifying practical solutions that catalyze a just and equitable society where all can participate and prosper.

Across the varied institutions represented by CEI, FCCP, and the Forum is a shared commitment to reliable and accurate data as a necessary foundation for a well-functioning government, a robust civil society, and thriving business sector in the United States — all centered in the fair allocation of political representation and public resources at the federal, state, and local levels. Funders rely on accurate census data to help identify community needs and prioritize grantmaking, and our grantees rely on accurate census data to serve and advocate for communities, especially those that have been undercounted historically at disproportionate rates, through their work on various issues including poverty, health care, criminal legal system reform, racial equity, education equity, climate change, and infrastructure improvement.

In a report and recommendations commissioned by CEI in 2021, [Looking to Census 2030](#), stakeholders discussed the important role of advisory committees. There was no decennial advisory committee for 2020, and the Census National Advisory Committee's charter lapsed before the 2020 Census. The report discussed the important role philanthropy played for 2020 and also urged the Bureau to ensure that advisory committees include a philanthropy perspective. The Bureau appointed a census expert from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to the Census National Advisory Committee. And we are pleased that the Census Bureau has responded to our recommendation to establish an advisory committee for 2030. Philanthropy has made a long-term commitment to continuing investment and engagement in preparations for the 2030 Census, so we continue to urge the Bureau to ensure that the perspective of philanthropy, as a key stakeholder and partner on the national, state, and local levels, be meaningfully represented on the 2030 Committee.

Key to achieving the goal of a fair and accurate census 2030 are trusted messengers at the national, state, and local levels. Philanthropic engagement in census activities is designed to support these trusted voices, through partnerships and resources, as they offer public education and technical assistance within their communities to other census partners, respondents, and Census Bureau job seekers alike. It is critical both that the Bureau understand how to best leverage this partnership and that philanthropy understands – in a more complete and timely manner – what the Bureau is planning and what the gaps might be that, as a federal agency, the Bureau can't fill as effectively as non-governmental partners.

We are pleased to nominate several candidates whose experience during the 2020 Census and ongoing engagement with preparations for 2030 would make them excellent representatives from philanthropy on the 2030 Committee. Below for your convenience are brief overviews of the candidates. Their resumes are attached. These leaders represent different geographies, types of institutions, and lived

experiences. We believe there is much to be learned from representatives who come from states that had less robust state government engagement and those who come from states where there were strong partnerships. Additionally, we note there may well be other qualified nominations from the philanthropic sector.

Carrie Davis, Director of the Democracy Program, Joyce Foundation (located in Illinois; funds in the Midwest and nationally)

Carrie Davis (she/they) serves as Democracy Program Director for the Joyce Foundation. Carrie manages the foundation's Democracy portfolio, which focuses on voting rights and elections, redistricting reform, and census, and co-leads a special pilot project examining the rise of political violence.

During the 2020 Census, Carrie held leadership roles in state and national census coalitions and led the Foundation's census grantmaking and partner support across the Great Lakes region. She served on the steering committee of the 2020 IL Count Me In statewide census coalition in Illinois, which had the seventh highest self-response rate in the country, and convened a weekly rapid response coordination call with the census leads for the City of Chicago, Cook County, State of Illinois, and the nonprofit IL Count Me In coalition, to address the unique operational needs during the Covid-19 pandemic. She also served on the national 2020 Census Funders Subgroup (now the Census Equity Initiative), where she co-chaired the Census Communications Subcommittee, and was an active member of the Funders Census Initiative. By serving in these complementary roles at the state and national levels, Carrie was able to elevate local concerns to national planning leaders and share national best practices with state census coalitions in the Great Lakes region.

She also worked closely with 2020 regional Census Bureau staff in the Midwest, including Chicago Regional Office Director Marilyn Sanders and Partnership Director Elissa Johnson. The Joyce Foundation's 2021-2025 strategy includes continued census work, at Davis's recommendation, focused on assessing the accuracy of the 2020 Census and where undercounts occurred, developing remediation approaches for 2020 undercounts, and advancing recommendations to improve the accuracy and equity of the 2030 Census.

David Martinez III, Director, Strategic Community Partnerships, Vitalyst Health Foundation (located in Phoenix; funds in Arizona)

David Martinez III (he/him) serves as a director at Vitalyst Health Foundation that partners across the state of Arizona, overseeing the foundation's grant programming and Civic Health portfolio, which includes the census. In 2020, he helped organize local funders as part of Arizona's Complete Count Philanthropic Committee to raise and distribute \$1 million to Get Out the Count efforts. That support specifically focused on historically undercounted communities on tribal lands, in communities of color, and in rural counties. It also included hosting workshops with Census staff and community-based organizations to engage nonprofits in the count.

David remains focused on building and sustaining civic infrastructure towards the 2030 Census, especially engaging more funders in Census efforts, engaging LGBTQ communities in census design, and making the connection that civic health efforts like the census are critical to the health of our democracy. He is Vice Chair of the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP) Census Initiative and is active with Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) and

Grantmakers in Health (GIH). He also serves as an advisor to the National Trust for Civic Infrastructure, an effort born out of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship.

Originally from Marana in rural Southern Arizona and one of six children, David is a first-generation college graduate earning a B.A. in Secondary Education, Political Science, and Journalism from The University of Arizona (UA).

Meghna Goswami, Program Director - Civic Engagement, The Houston Endowment (located in Houston; funds in Texas)

Meghna Goswami is the Program Director of Civic Engagement at Houston Endowment, a place-based private philanthropic entity in greater Houston. Meghna leads Houston Endowment's strategy to strengthen residents' access to civic and electoral processes. Meghna has a strong background in collaborating with leaders from the nonprofit, public and philanthropic sector to address complex social problems in greater Houston. Meghna is also on the board of directors of Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees.

Meghna led Houston Endowment's work at ensuring a fair and accurate count during the 2020 Census in greater Houston. Meghna supported efforts to bring the City of Houston, Harris County and nonprofits together for the first time to form a complete count committee for the region with unified strategies. Meghna also helped connect local efforts to national funder and nonprofit networks, to bring additional best practices and funding to the region. Meghna oversaw \$2,582,500 in grantmaking to enhance census efforts in the 13-county region in greater Houston. In addition, she served as an advisor to the Texas Count Pooled Fund, a statewide fund supporting census efforts across Texas.

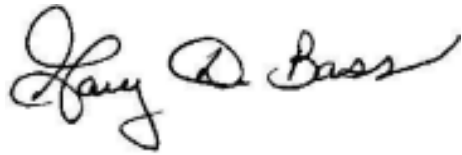
Patricia Swann, Consultant (former Program Director, Thriving Communities), New York Community Trust (located in New York; funds in New York)

Patricia Swann (she/her) anchored grantmaking for the New York Community Trust in the areas of community development, affordable housing, civic affairs, and nonprofit capacity-building for more than 20 years. She began working at The Trust in 1999 and transitioned to a part-time role earlier this year. She is a co-chair of the GoVoteNYC donor collaborative, former chair of the New York State Census Equity Fund, and former co-chair of the Capital Change Fund. She is also a member of the advisory committee of Fair Representation in Redistricting, a coalition of national and local foundations concerned about the damage to our democracy resulting from gerrymandered voting districts.

While she was co-chair, the NY State Census Equity Fund distributed \$3.5 million in grants to organizations and academic institutions to ensure a fair and accurate census count for New York State. Working with an advisory board of a dozen foundation leaders from across the state, NYSCEF connected groups to training and technical resources to prepare for census-related work, supported get-out-the-count activities during the pandemic-impacted implementation of the census, and engaged communities in post-census redistricting activities. A newly constituted advisory board, composed of census allies from philanthropy, academia and the nonprofit sector, continues the work of NYSCEF, informing the public about the importance of the census and laying the groundwork for nonprofit and philanthropic involvement in Census 2030.

In closing, we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspectives and to recommend several nominees for your consideration, to help achieve our mutual goal of achieving a more equitable census in 2030. We thank you for considering our views on this important topic.

Sincerely,

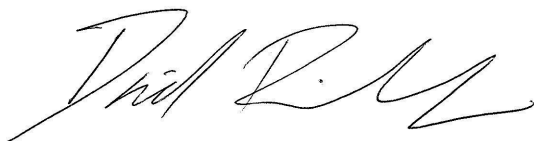
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Gary D. Bass
President, GDB Consulting & Executive Director Emeritus, Bauman Foundation
Chair, Census Equity Initiative

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaShanda A. Jackson". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "LaShanda" being the most prominent.

LaShanda A. Jackson, MBA
Executive Director, Funders' Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP)

Sol Marie Alfonso-Jones
Program Director, Long Island Community Foundation
Chair, Funders' Committee Census Initiative (FCCI)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Biemesderfer". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

David Biemesderfer
President & CEO, United Philanthropy Forum