



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0209-2010, **Version:** \*

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### Preconsidered Res. No. 209

Resolution calling upon the United States Census Bureau to extend its April 15, 2010 deadline for returning Census forms and to keep both its Question Assistance Centers and Be Counted Sites open for an additional 30 days.

By Council Members Vann, Brewer, Reyna, Chin, Comrie, Fidler, Rose, Williams and Rodriguez

Whereas, The United States Census Bureau is required by the United States Constitution to count every resident in the United States every ten years and 2010 is a “census year”; and

Whereas, In March of 2010, census forms were delivered to every household in the United States and its territories with instructions for residents to fill in the form that was provided so as to account for every individual residing within each residence as of April 1, 2010 and included a prepaid envelope in which the completed form would be mailed back to the Census Bureau as soon as possible; and

Whereas, The United States Census Bureau designated April 15, 2010 as the deadline for returning Census forms; and

Whereas, No borough within the City of New York has yet to achieve the Census Bureau’s goal of a 70 percent mail return rate for the City, and with its current mail return rate at 51 percent as of April 9, 2010, the City has fallen below both the national and state rates, which were 65 percent and 59 percent, respectively; and

Whereas, As of April 9, 2010, The neighboring counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester have mail return rates above 60 percent; and

Whereas, The City of New York’s population has always been considered to be extremely hard-to-count due to diversity in housing, areas of concentrated poverty, and a large immigrant population; and

Whereas, New York City residents had only a 55 percent mail response rate in the 2000 Census, which

was well below the national average at that time of 67 percent; and

Whereas, It appears that the Census Bureau missed some places of residence during their canvassing efforts in the summer of 2009 which caused some households to receive multiple census forms while others received the form late or not at all; and

Whereas, These mishaps, coupled with an inherent fear of government by some City residents, have confounded efforts to effectively educate the public on both the importance and significance of census participation, and

Whereas, A low census response rate could have very severe consequences for our City such as greatly reduced Federal aid and the redistricting of electoral districts, which would impact the City's legislative representation in the United States Congress, the New York State legislature, and with the Council of the City of New York; and

Whereas, According to an April 2010 press release from the Mayor's Office, the City will lose roughly \$3,000 a year in federal funding for every New Yorker that is not counted in the census, and

Whereas, As one of the major economic engines of our country, New York City will only be able to maintain and increase its level of productivity if it receives the level of resources adequate for its population based on the most accurate Census 2010 count; and

Whereas, In order for the City of New York to have a chance at creating both a better response rate and a more accurate count for the 2010 United States Census, and taking into account the City's current return rate, which serves as a clear indication that more time is required in order for both government and community stakeholders to continue their efforts at increasing the mail participation rate citywide, and now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Census Bureau to extend its April 15, 2010 deadline for returning Census forms and to keep both its Question Assistance Centers and Be Counted Sites open for an additional 30 days.

AS 4-13-10