

January 30, 2020

I am writing to encourage you to participate in the 2020 Census. The first census of the United States was conducted in 1790, and has been conducted every 10 years thereafter. Our nation's founders thought that a census was important enough to include it as a Constitutional mandate.

The census is much more than a headcount. It provides a picture of our nation that helps determine where to build new schools, hospitals, senior centers, and businesses. It directly affects how federal funding (more than \$675 billion) is distributed and how congressional seats are apportioned. It also helps us see how our communities have changed over time. The demographic, social, and economic data that is available about Hillsdale on the internet is, in part, a result of US Census Bureau data. That's why an accurate count is important.

Over 95% of us will receive a census invitation in the mail around mid-March, but a small fraction may receive a paper questionnaire either by mail or personally when a census-taker drops it off at your house. The invitations that most of us will receive in Hillsdale will call for us to respond online at www.2020census.gov or by phone. If you don't respond, you will get a reminder by U.S. postal mail and eventually receive a paper questionnaire to fill out.

The confidentiality of your responses is strictly protected by federal law, and the data can **only** be used for statistical purposes that help inform important decisions like how much federal funding Hillsdale, Bergen County, and New Jersey might receive. You will not be asked for your Social Security number, nor bank or credit card numbers.

So please, when your household receives its census invitation in the mail in a few weeks, don't ignore it. Take the time to go online and fill it out, or respond by phone. There is no reason not to, and every incentive to do so. Thanks!!

Mayor John J. Ruocco