

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

September 4, 2026

Mr. George M. Cook
Deputy Under Secretary, Performing the Non-Exclusive Functions and Duties of the Director
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road
Suitland, MD 20746

Dear Mr. Cook:

On August 18th, the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) issued a report titled “Noncitizen Voting in the 2020 Election, A Beginning Analysis” (the Beginning Analysis). As part of the Analysis, Bureau personnel purportedly compared voter records against citizenship records to identify noncitizen voting in the 2020 presidential election. Oversight Democrats have received reports that appears to make clear that the Bureau has perverted agency resources to support President Trump’s perpetual election denialism efforts.¹ Oversight Democrats are investigating the blatant misuse of taxpayer resources to support President Trump’s big lie, which threatens to undermine faith in both our democracy and in the vital, nonpartisan mission of the Bureau. We therefore demand that you immediately rescind the Beginning Analysis and provide information about related activities that will certainly harm public trust in the Bureau.

On November 3, 2020, Joe Biden clearly and definitely beat Trump in the presidential election. Nevertheless, in his apparent fear of defeat, Trump made bogus claims about the 2020 election and sought legal actions to appear to justify it. Trump and his allies filed dozens of lawsuits and election audits with an explicit goal of promoting election conspiracy theories and overturning a presidential election. Despite this flood of disputes, federal judges in 61 cases—including those appointed by Republican presidents—found no widespread fraud that would alter the results of the 2020 election. Joe Biden firmly received 306 electoral college votes to Trump’s 232.²

The mere publication of the Beginning Analysis in service of Trump’s big lie threatens to undermine trust in the independence and credibility of the Bureau. The Bureau has been historically regarded as a public institution that employs rigor and integrity in each of its statistical quality standards and operations. As stated by former Census Bureau Director Rob

¹ Information provided to Committee Democratic staff.

² *By The Numbers: President Donald Trump’s Failed Efforts to Overturn the Election*, USA Today (Jan. 6, 2021) (online at www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/politics/elections/2021/01/06/trumps-failed-efforts-overturn-election-numbers/4130307001/).

Santos, “[t]he scientific reputation of the Bureau has been beyond reproach. And as long as that document sits on the Census Bureau’s website, that’s no longer the case.”³ To one policy expert, “[t]his is the weakest methodology description I’ve ever seen in a Census Bureau publication.”⁴ Despite clear indicators that the Beginning Analysis lacks thoroughness and integrity, Trump falsely claimed that this initial review proved he “WON THE ELECTION” in 2020—another attempt to further instigate Trump’s embarrassing hyper fixation on the 2020 presidential election.⁵

The Beginning Analysis fails to meet the standard of rigor that is typically applied to these projects. The methodology section of the report is sparse. While the drafters mentioned certain agencies and external groups it partnered with to compile this information, the Beginning Analysis fails to list a full list of datasets (both internal and external) used to conduct its analysis. Without a full list of the datasets and information used in developing a matching process, we cannot be sure that the figures described in the Beginning Analysis are accurate and verifiable. While the Bureau mentioned that it received commercial data from a private company, Data-Clear, to build datasets for a “linkage” (or matching) process, Data-Clear’s President publicly reported that the voter information obtained through their company did not include Social Security Numbers (SSNs)—critical information needed to ensure the data is verifiable and accurate.⁶ It is unclear how the Bureau remedied such data given the voter file did not contain SSNs. The Beginning Analysis details its findings are reflective of “high-confidence” data matches, but it fails to define what constitutes a “high-confidence” match.⁷ Also, as part of a rigorous work product, we would expect the authors to detail all limitations identified in composing this work product. The Beginning Analysis does not consider any possible errors or anomalies, especially in the data used in the “linkage” process.⁸ It also fails to outline the statistical significance of its findings. It’s very possible that the 24,000 identified noncitizen voters are simply errors in the matching process. Without a complete and transparent understanding of the methodology and limitations underpinning the Beginning Analysis, its results are essentially useless.

It is notable that the Beginning Analysis fails to list its authors, given that the Bureau almost always does.⁹ Public reports and information provided to Committee Democratic staff

³ *Experts Raise Alarms over Census Bureau Report Trump is Touting on Noncitizen Voting*, National Public Radio (Aug. 20, 2026) (online at www.npr.org/transcripts/nx-s1-5938799).

⁴ *Fact Focus: Census Bureau Report Does Not Prove Trump’s Claim about Noncitizen Voting in 2020*, Associated Press (Aug. 21, 2026) (online at www.apnews.com/article/fact-check-trump-noncitizen-voting-census-bureau-36cf1524fda629b139b7de5c86119622).

⁵ *Trump Revives Unverified Claims of Noncitizen Voting in 2020*, Washington Post (Aug. 18, 2026) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/08/18/trump-revives-unverified-claims-noncitizen-voting-2020/).

⁶ *Experts Slam Trump’s Unusual New Census Report as A “Hijack by the White House”*, CNN (Aug. 20, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/08/20/politics/flawed-census-report-alleged-noncitizen-voting).

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, *Noncitizen Voting in the 2020 Election, A Beginning Analysis* (Aug. 2026) (online at www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2026/dir/noncitizen-voting-in-the-2020-election.pdf).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ See U.S. Census Bureau, *Census Publications* (online at www.census.gov/library/publications.html#paginationJump) (accessed Aug. 26, 2026).

indicate that the Bureau hired individuals through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act to work on this project.¹⁰ These individuals are affiliated with the America First Policy Institute, a conservative think tank that advocates for election security efforts in support of the Trump Administration.¹¹ This raises questions as to whether the Bureau wanted to guard employees' names from being associated with a defective analysis, or whether it was an effort to shield actors from being associated with an analysis conducted for political reasons.

Committee Democratic staff are also aware of a larger project at the Bureau titled “Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation,” which has been purportedly created to “answer questions from Census Bureau and Department of Commerce senior leadership about decennial census policies, procedures, and business rules to inform decision-making for the 2030 Census.”¹² In past decennial censuses this evaluation consisted of two components—the Post-Enumeration Survey and Demographic Analysis. This project is currently headed by political appointee Michael Lachanski, Deputy Director for Data, Policy, and Science at the Bureau. Information provided to the Committee shows that the Bureau, under the Trump Administration, brought in at least six individuals affiliated with the America First Policy Institute and one Special Government Employee with the Department of Commerce to this project. We understand that these members may be working on various research activities using census infrastructure and data, including but not limited to the Beginning Analysis.¹³

We have numerous concerns with the legal justification for the Beginning Analysis. The Bureau asserts that the Permanent Census Office Act of 1902, specifically the enacted 13 U.S. Code § 101, grants the authority to conduct the Beginning Analysis. However, the Bureau misinterprets this federal law. 13 U.S. Code § 101 allows the Secretary to collect information every ten years through a decennial census relating to “defective, dependent, and delinquent classes” and crime statistics. However, it does not permit the Bureau to act outside the decennial census by merging data from governmental and non-governmental sources and making deductions from such information.¹⁴

Finally, we note that even the politicized, methodologically inadequate analysis does not support Trump’s claim that noncitizen voting influenced the 2020 election.¹⁵ The Bureau has stated that it found 24,000 noncitizens voter records at the time of the 2020 election. Even if this data point were accurate, 24,000 represents a negligible difference in the universe of ballots cast

¹⁰ The Intergovernmental Personnel Act provides an employment pathway that has been historically used for workers within local governments, universities, and tribal organizations to work on term-limited assignments with the federal government.

¹¹ *Experts Raise Alarms over Census Bureau Report Trump is Touting on Noncitizen Voting*, National Public Radio (Aug. 20, 2026) (online at www.npr.org/2026/08/19/nx-s1-5938799/trump-census-bureau-noncitizen-voting).

¹² Information provided to Committee Democratic staff.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ 13 U.S. C. § 101.

¹⁵ Bipartisan Policy Center, *Four Things to Know about Noncitizen Voting* (accessed Aug. 26, 2026) (online at www.bipartisanpolicy.org/article/four-things-to-know-about-noncitizen-voting/).

in the 2020 election. 24,000 votes represent 0.015% of the total votes cast in the 2020 general election for president, which is smaller than the margin of victory in every single state for that election year.¹⁶ Donald Trump did not receive more electoral college votes in the 2020 election, did not receive a popular majority of votes in the 2020 election, and this analysis does not change that fact.¹⁷

The Bureau is the primary institution responsible for carrying out the U.S. census every ten years, as well as supplemental surveys of American households such as the American Community Survey. The decennial census is the sole basis for drawing congressional district boundaries and determining the allocation of more than \$2.8 trillion in federal funds, which are based on total population. This funding is used for building roads and highways, supporting school breakfast and lunch programs, keeping rural hospitals afloat, and supporting veteran families, among other vital services.¹⁸ The Bureau's reputation as a rigorous scientific research institution will be threatened by a public that perceives it as a partisan institution, especially one willing to degrade its own research products to satisfy the ill will of the President.

For these reasons, I request that you provide the following documents and information no later than September 18, 2026:

1. A full and complete list of all datasets, systems of record (including any cloud-based platforms), and the sources of such information prepared, accessed, merged, or used in connection with:
 - a. the Beginning Analysis; and
 - b. any other activities relating to the "Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation" project, from January 1, 2025, to the present;
2. All computer matching agreements, system of records, memoranda of understanding, and agreements relating to:
 - a. the Beginning Analysis; and
 - b. "Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation" project, from January 1, 2025, to the present;

¹⁶ The American Presidency Project, *Statistics (2020)* (accessed Aug. 26, 2026) (online at www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/2020)

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, *Census Bureau Data Guide More Than \$2.8 Trillion in Federal Funding in Fiscal Year 2021* (June 14, 2023) (online at www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/decennial-census-federal-funds-distribution.html); U.S. Census Bureau, *Uses of Decennial Census Programs Data in Federal Funds Distribution: Fiscal Year 2021* (June 2023) (online at www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2023/decennial/census-data-federal-funds-fy-2021.pdf)

3. A full and complete list of all individuals involved in the development, analysis, drafting, and distribution of the Beginning Analysis;
 - a. Please provide copies of all related approval routing slips;
4. A full and complete list of all individuals that have ever been and are currently involved in the “Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation” project, from January 1, 2025, to the present;
5. All memoranda, analyses, issue briefs, including drafts, prepared for or used in connection with:
 - a. the Beginning Analysis; and
 - b. “Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation” project, from January 1, 2025, to the present;
6. All documents and communications regarding any data processing anomalies, errors, problems, or concerns by Bureau personnel during the development and drafting of the Beginning Analysis;
7. All communications between or among officials from the Department of Commerce, the Bureau, and any other office or entity inside or outside the government regarding:
 - a. the Beginning Analysis; and
 - b. “Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation” project, from January 1, 2025, to the present;
8. A list of all legal authorities invoked for the creation of the “Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation” project and any activities therein;
9. A list of all federal funding sources being used for the “Decennial Census Data Quality Evaluation” project, the Beginning Analysis, and any additional activities therein, from January 1, 2025, to the present.

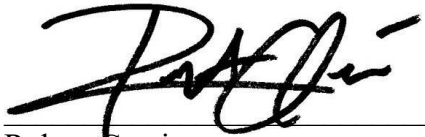
In addition, we respectfully urge you to rescind the Beginning Analysis and remove this document from the Bureau’s website. Please reply no later than September 18, 2026, to confirm whether you will take these actions.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any

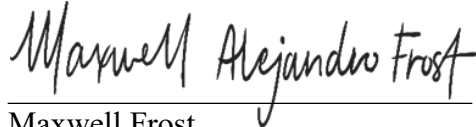
matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. In addition, the Committee has jurisdiction over “[p]opulation and demography generally, including the Census.”¹⁹ If you have any questions about this request, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Minority staff at (202) 225-5051.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

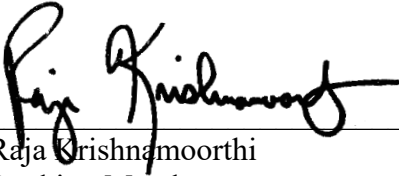
Sincerely,



Robert Garcia
Ranking Member



Maxwell Frost
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,
Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health Care and
Financial Services

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

The Honorable Eric Burlison, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs

The Honorable Glenn Grothman, Chairman
Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

¹⁹ House rule X, clause 1(n)(8).