



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
Mike Villarreal

October 13, 2009

Governor Rick Perry  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry:

As the 2010 census draws near, I urge you to ensure that our state government is taking every appropriate step to ensure the highest possible level of participation by Texas residents. The stakes are high. Promoting participation in the census will improve our state's chances of attaining the federal funding and political representation that our growing population deserves. If we succeed, we will receive more of our own tax dollars back from the Federal government, easing our ability to meet our needs in transportation, education, health and human services and other areas.

First, I encourage you to establish a Complete Count Committee for the state. Currently, 18 other states have established such committees, along with many cities throughout Texas. However, Texas does not have a coordinated statewide effort.

Second, I encourage you to call on state agencies to use their existing lines of communication to inform the public about the census. In particular, state agencies should capitalize on existing communications with the "hard to count" populations identified by the U.S. Census Bureau, including the elderly, children, minorities, renters and low-income individuals. For example, census information could be included with materials that the Health and Human Services Commission already mails to participants in public assistance programs.

The goal of these efforts should be to encourage Texans to trust and participate in the census. The Census Bureau's message to the public is that the census is "easy, important and safe." The Census Bureau's Texas Outreach Director, Marisela Rosales, has informed me that she and her team stand by ready to work with us. She may be reached at (214) 637-9680. Additionally, the Census Bureau has prepared a number of resources and materials for outreach partners to download from its website, <http://2010.census.gov/partners/>.



We face a short timeline. In March 2010, census questionnaires will be delivered to households throughout the state. The next month, Census Bureau workers will begin to visit households that have not responded by mail. By acting quickly to establish a coordinated statewide effort to urge Texans to participate in the Census, we can improve our communities' and our state's ability to prosper and accommodate a growing population over the next decade.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Villarreal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Villarreal" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Villarreal  
Vice Chair, House Committee on Redistricting

cc: Susan Combs, Comptroller of Public Accounts  
Greg Abbott, Attorney General  
Todd Staples, Agriculture Commissioner  
Hope Andrade, Secretary of State  
Tom Suehs, Executive Commissioner, Health and Human Services Commission  
Robert Scott, Commissioner, Texas Education Agency  
Michael Gerber, Executive Director, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs