

Written Testimony

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Public Statement on Census Undercounts in Randolph

As Town Manager of Randolph, I see every day how deeply our community's diversity strengthens us. Immigrant families, long-time residents, and newcomers from around the world all contribute to the energy and character that make Randolph special. Yet, despite our growth and vitality, census undercounts—especially in communities like ours—continue to have lasting and harmful effects on funding and representation.

When residents are missed in the federal or local census, our town loses critical federal and state dollars that support schools, public safety, health services, housing, and transportation. Each uncounted person means fewer resources for the programs that help our families thrive. These undercounts also distort political representation, making it harder for Randolph's voice to be fully heard at both the state and federal levels when congressional, state senate and state representative districts are drawn.

The 2020 federal census undercount had an especially significant impact on Randolph. Because our true population was not fully reflected in the initial count, Randolph did not meet the thresholds required to try to be designated as a Gateway Community—a status that would make us eligible for a wide range of state programs and investments in economic development, housing, and education. For example, Governor Healey announced the “Gateway to Pre-K” agenda, which aims to deliver universal, high-quality preschool access for all four-year-olds in Gateway Cities by the end of 2026. Every family of a four-year-old would have the opportunity—at low or no cost—to enroll their child in a high-quality preschool program that prepares them for kindergarten. This is just one example of how census undercounts can have real financial and developmental consequences for our town.

Even our local experience underscores the issue. As a resident, I know that the annual town census for my own street does not accurately reflect the number of people who actually live there. This pattern likely repeats across the community, highlighting the gap between our reality and the data used to guide policy and distribute resources. Additionally, failing to respond to the annual local census can result in residents being listed as inactive voters, which may cause delays or confusion when checking in at the polls. Ensuring accurate participation in both the federal and local census processes helps protect everyone's right to vote and strengthens civic engagement.

To build a stronger Randolph, we must ensure that every resident—regardless of language, citizenship status, or country of origin—is counted. Census participation is safe, confidential, and vital to our future. When everyone counts, everyone benefits.