

Week of June 28, 2010



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Census Winding Down

In a few days, on July 10, U.S. Census workers will finish collecting data, and it will be time to begin analyzing the 2010 Census information and the effects the population break-downs will have on each state. The census data will determine federal funding as well as the reapportionment and redistricting of state and federal House seats and state Senate seats. For Missouri, the outcome is particularly important, because based on early census projections, our state is very close to losing its ninth Congressional seat.

In fact, the margin between keeping and losing a seat in the U.S. House is so thin that counting or missing less than one percent of Missouri's population could make the difference, which is why we've been working to make sure every Missourian is counted. Losing that seat would mean less representation for the state at the federal level. It would also mean Missouri gets a smaller portion of the approximately \$400 billion in federal funding each year that will be divided based on the census—it's estimated that Missouri receives up to \$1,300 for every person included in the count. Those dollars go for crucial services such as roads and other infrastructure maintenance and improvements, as well as schools, hospitals, emergency services, support for senior citizens and many other items that residents use on a daily basis.

The U.S. Census Bureau is tracking census participation rates by state, county and city via its website (<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/take10map>). After the mailed portion of the census deadline passed (April 27), Missouri's participation rate was 73 percent compared with the national rate of 72 percent. Since that time, census takers have been visiting the homes of those who didn't respond by mail, asking them to complete the 10 short questions on the census form. These census workers will continue to visit homes into July, and final rates will be posted in the fall and will include late mail returns.

Missouri's participation rate may be on track with the nation's rate, but if you look at the individual counties, many of our rural areas are reporting low participation when

compared with our urban areas. With time running out, we must work to get every Missourian counted so our state receives its fair share of federal funding and is properly represented in Washington, D.C. If you did not receive a form or a visit from a census taker, call the Census Bureau's Telephone Questionnaire Assistance line at **866-872-6868**, which will remain open until July 10, 2010.

The decennial census count is a constitutionally required task that has been carried out since 1790, when the first census took place a little more than a year after the inauguration of President George Washington and shortly before the second session of the first Congress came to a close. Less than 15 years before the first U.S. Census was carried out, another monumental event in our nation's history took place: on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress voted to approve the Declaration of Independence, declaring to the world that the United States of America was a sovereign nation.

The Founding Fathers created a new nation where people were not just free, but guaranteed the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Never before had individual rights been so deep-rooted in a country's foundation, and to this day, freedom is the essence of our democracy. Since our nation's beginnings, this freedom has come at a great cost, and it continues to be earned by our brave service men and women serving at home and abroad.

This weekend, Missourians from across the state will celebrate Independence Day with their families and friends. Whether you travel or stay close to home, have a great, safe Fourth of July, and let us all recognize the freedom so many have tirelessly fought to protect.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office with your questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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