

2010 CENSUS SCRAMBLES HOPES, FEARS

By Jacqueline Baylón

Next year's April 1 Decennial Census kick-off is already attracting lots of interest and some apprehension in the Hispanic community. As Latino organizations pledge to work with the Census Bureau this time around, they're expressing concern that the federal government could, among other worries, miss counting well over a million Hispanics, as it admitted to doing in 2000.



VARGAS

Several Hispanic organizations have joined forces to help the Census Bureau by launching the campaign *Ya es hora, ¡Hágase Contar!* (It's

Time, Make Yourself Count!).

The project is led by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, which promotes participation of Latinos in the U.S. political process.

In 2006, the *Ya es Hora ¡Ciudadanía!* drive was geared to encourage eligible perma-

nent residents to apply for U.S. citizenship.

In 2008, a second phase, *Ya es Hora ¡Ve y Vota!*, rallied Latinos to participate in that year's presidential election.

Now, with the partnership of *Mi Familia Vota* Education Fund, NALEO's Educational Fund, along with the National Council of *La Raza*, League of United Latin American Citizens, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and other ethnic and union groups, the civic action continues with a focus on obtaining a full Census count.

Involved also are several Spanish-language media companies, among them *Azteca América*, *Entravisión* Communications, *ImpreMedia*, *Univisión* Communications and *Telemundo*. On April 1 the latter cable channel, which is directed at bilingual Latinos, kicked off its public service campaign "*Hazte Contar!*" (Be Counted).

Organizations partnering with *Telemundo* include LULAC, the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute and *MANA*, a National Latina Organization.

The 2010 Census is expected to cost the

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KEY CENSUS DATES

Here are key dates for preparing and conducting a successful 2010 census, as outlined by the U.S. Census Bureau:

- **Fall 2008:** Recruitment begins for local census jobs for early operations.
- **Spring 2009:** Census workers go door-to-door to update address lists.
- **Fall 2009:** Major recruitment begins for enumerators needed for peak workload in 2010.
- **February – March 2010:** Census questionnaires are mailed or delivered to households.
- **April 1, 2010:** Census Day.
- **April – July 2010:** Census takers visit households that did not return a questionnaire by mail.
- **December 2010:** By law, Census Bureau delivers population counts to President for apportionment.
- **March 2011:** Bureau completes delivery of redistricting data to states.

Census Hurdle: 3% Hispanic Error Rate in 2000

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government \$14 billion. The U.S. Constitution requires the Census Bureau to count everyone residing in the United States and its territories every ten years regardless of immigration status.

Angelo Falcón, president of the New York-based National Institute for Latino Policy,



FALCON

says to ensure a valid tally, the bureau must hire trained bilingual enumerators, including a sufficient number to reach growing immigrant populations who speak indigenous languages. Falcón, who serves as a member of the Census Bureau's Hispanic advisory committee and chairs the watchdog Latino Census Network, a collaborative of some 30 organizations focused on census issues, mentions workplace raids by Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) as a potentially serious turn-off to communities whose cooperation is essential.

Gabriela Lemus, president of Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, told Weekly Report her organization has already gone on record asking ICE to discontinue its

aggressive actions that breed distrust of our government and disrupt families. ICE should direct its enforcement attention to employers who are breaking the law.

If the 3% Hispanic undercount of 2000 Census is repeated in 2010, 1.4 million Latinos will be missed, by the bureau's own admission. That, advocates point out, is equivalent to two congressional districts.

"The census is the foundation of our democracy and we cannot have fair representation as Latinos in Congress and state legislatures without a full census," says Arturo Vargas, NALEO executive director.

Raúl Cisneros, Decennial's media relations branch chief at the U.S. Department of Commerce, explains, "The count is used to determine how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives."

More than \$300 billion in federal funds is awarded based on census data to states and communities to support a variety of programs and public services.

More than 15% of the nation's population is Hispanic. Between 2010 and 2050 the Hispanic population is projected to triple, raising its proportion to 25%.

The Census Bureau projects Hispanics' economic muscle will rise from \$862 billion in 2007 to more than \$1.2 trillion in 2012, accounting for 9.7% of all U.S. buying power.