



31st ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs

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House Joint Resolution 19 Sponsor Statement

“Urging the United States Congress to fully fund the United States Census Bureau for the 2020 Census; urging the governor to prioritize an accurate count for the 2020 Census; and urging local governments to establish local complete count commissions.”

HJR 19 highlights the importance of the Decennial Census in Alaska. The resolution urges the Federal Delegation to fully fund the Census, for the State to prioritize outreach efforts that ensure accuracy of data and calls on local governments to take an active role in ensuring all communities are counted by developing local complete count commissions.

Alaska receives \$3.2 billion dollars in federal funding each year, dependent on formulas tied to Census data. In a time of state and local budget constraints, maintaining federal funding is critical to Alaska’s economy, communities and programs. Reduced federal funding compounds state and local budget gaps. Lack of accurate Census data discourages investments in communities across the state. Organizations across public, private, and nonprofit sectors rely on these funds, illustrating the importance of accurate count information. Undercounted Alaskans can result in a loss of \$3,000 of federal funding per year to the state, per person; equivalent to \$30,000 per person lost to Alaska over a ten-year period.

With geographic, language, and connectivity barriers, Alaska is considered one of the most difficult states to count in the Decennial Census. Alaska needs an active Complete Count Commission that prioritizes an accurate count of the population, before starting conversations about how the data will be used.

As the 2020 Census launches its count in Toksook Bay on January 21, 2020, it is imperative that Alaska’s leadership, at all levels of government, prioritize an accurate count.