

The President's Radio Address

April 1, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to speak with you about an opportunity to shape the future of our country, and a responsibility we all have to make our voices count. I want to talk about this year's census and the importance of filling out and sending in your census form right away.

The Constitution mandates that our Nation conduct a census every 10 years. The first was taken back in 1790 and was directed by Thomas Jefferson when he served as Secretary of State. Every decade since then, the census has helped tell the story of America—who we are and what we're becoming.

Census 2000 is our chance to write the latest chapter in the unfolding epoch of America. Even though the census is taken only once in a decade, it has an impact on our lives every day. A report I'm releasing today by the Council of Economic Advisers shows just how much we need the census.

We need the census to help decide how almost \$200 billion in Federal funds will be invested in States and communities. We need the census to draw legislative district lines and allocate seats for each State in the U.S. House of Representatives. We need the census to help our hometowns determine where to build everything from roads to schools to hospitals to child care centers. And we need the census to help businesses make decisions about where to invest and help individuals make informed decisions about where to buy a home or take a job.

For all of these reasons, it's important to make sure the first census of the 21st century is fair, accurate, and complete. After all, if we want to make good decisions about where we need to go as a nation, we first have to know where we are.

In the last census, we didn't know where more than 8 million people were. They were left uncounted. Many of them were children, minorities, and low income families. When people are uncounted, their voices are unheard in the Halls of Congress and in their own communities.

Those who suggest that filling out your census form isn't essential are plainly wrong. An inaccurate census distorts our under-

standing of a community's needs, denies people their fair share of resources, and diminishes the quality of life not only for them but for all of us. If we believe everybody in our American community counts, we simply must make sure everyone is counted.

That's an enormous undertaking. This year's census represents the largest peacetime mobilization in American history, involving hundreds of thousands of local census takers and community volunteers. But the most important person in the process is you.

I want to thank the millions of Americans who have sent in their forms. As of today, we're halfway there. But we must do better. We need the most accurate picture of America in the dawn of the 21st century.

So today I'm issuing a proclamation declaring this Census Day and urging all Americans to take a little time this weekend to fill out and send in your form. I've also issued a memorandum to all Federal employees urging them to do the same. Having completed our census form, I can tell you it only takes a few moments.

You can also fill out your census form online, as the Vice President did just recently. The on-line form can be found at www.2000.census.gov. It won't take long. The short form is the shortest since 1820. The long form is the shortest in history. And every question on both forms was reviewed by Congress 2 years ago.

But more important, information from the long form is critical for everything from helping communities design mass transit systems to providing 911 emergency services. It also helps us calculate cost of living increases for Social Security, military retirement, and veterans' pensions.

I know Americans are concerned about their privacy, and that's why I also want to stress that the information you provide is strictly, absolutely confidential. Individual information will not be available to anyone outside the Census Bureau for any reason.

So whether you have a long or a short form, please fill it out completely and send it in promptly. America is counting on you. This is your future. Don't leave it blank.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:38 p.m. on March 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 31 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Proclamation 7286—Census Day, 2000

April 1, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every 10 years, as mandated by our Constitution, all persons living in the United States are called upon to participate in the census. As the foremost method of gathering information about our Nation, the census plays a crucial role in helping us to maintain our democratic form of government.

An accurate census helps to ensure that the rights and needs of every person are recorded and recognized as we shape public policies, programs, and services. Too often in the past, children, minorities, and low-income individuals have not been counted and, as a result, have not been fully and fairly served. Census data are also used to determine the number of seats each State is allocated in the U.S. House of Representatives, and State and local governments depend upon these data to draw legislative districts that accurately represent their residents.

The census also serves as the basis for many public funding and private investment decisions. Census results play a part in determining the portion each State receives of more than \$185 billion in funds distributed by the Federal Government each year. State and local public officials use census data to decide where to build public facilities such as schools, roads, hospitals, and libraries. Census data also are a valuable resource for businesses that are trying to identify where to build stores, office buildings, or shopping centers.

The census is unique. It reaches every population group, from America's long-time residents to its most recent immigrants, and every age group from newborns to centenarians. The census touches every social class

and every racial and ethnic group. The census is truly a democratic process in which we all can participate.

Census 2000 offers each of us an important opportunity to shape the future of our Nation. By taking part, we help ensure the well-being of our families and our communities, and we fulfill one of our fundamental civic duties. The U.S. Census Bureau has taken unprecedented steps to ensure full participation in this first census of the new millennium. At the same time, the Bureau will continue its long tradition of protecting the personal information of America's citizens, and no other Government agency will be able to see any individual or family census form. I strongly urge every man and woman living in the United States to fill out and return his or her census form or to cooperate with census takers who will help them do so.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 1, 2000, as Census Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness of the importance of participating in Census 2000.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 4, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

Remarks at an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Luncheon for Hillary Clinton

April 1, 2000

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

The President. —we couldn't have done what has been done without you, and I'll