



Public Comment of Randi Schmidt of the Children's Leadership Council

Good morning, I am Randi Carmen Schmidt, Executive Director of the Children's Leadership Council (CLC). The CLC is a coalition of more than 55 of the nation's major organizations dedicated to improving the lives and opportunities of American babies, children and youth.

Nationwide, CLC members work to advance the health, education and well-being of children and youth in order to prepare them for school, work, and life. The CLC is the only national children's coalition solely dedicated to supporting, protecting and advancing investments in our nation's children from birth through young adulthood. Our members include:

- National Association of Head Start
- Child Care Aware of America
- National Black Child Development Institute
- Early Care and Education Consortium
- First Five Years Fund
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Zero to Three

Collectively, CLC's members have affiliates, partners, and members in every state in the nation.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

CLC members frequently use statistical information from the Census Bureau to conduct research, guide decision-making, advocacy and communications work, and plan for the future. Because of our member's use of Census data for the work they do on behalf of our nation's children, and because we know the importance of census data to informing federal funding decisions that impact the lives of children, their families and their communities, the CLC and its members are very concerned that children, specifically young children, had the highest net undercount of any age group in the 2010 Decennial Census. We are also concerned that young children of color, children who are now the majority of young children in our nation, have much higher net undercounts than other children. (Table 1 provides some of the key data regarding the undercount of young children in the 2010 Census.)

According to the Census Bureau's own research, the net undercount rate for young children age 0 to 4 was 4.6 percent. This translates into a net undercount of about one million young children. However because the net undercount rate is a product of people included erroneously -most those counted more than once- and people missed in the Census, it does not reflect the real magnitude of the problem. Recent research from the Census Bureau indicates that more than 10 percent of young children –or one of our every ten children ages zero to four - were omitted from the 2010 Census.

Research also indicates that large counties have the highest net undercount rate for young children. For example, in the ten largest counties in the country the net undercount rates averaged 11 percent. Given the relationship between the net undercount rate and the rate of omissions, it suggests that in many large counties one-quarter to one-fifth of young children were not included in the 2010 Census.



These errors have many consequences, but one of the key implications is that communities with a relatively high net undercount of young children do not get their fair share of federal funding. Research shows that Census data are used for distributing more than \$400 billion in federal funding each year and many of these programs (see Table 2) focus on young children. And for children of color who have higher poverty rates than Non-Hispanic White children, their high net undercount, and its impact on federal funding, effectively penalizes children that are already disadvantaged.

The undercount of young children in the Census also has ramification for a decade. The post-census population estimates the Census Bureau produces every year, start with Census counts. So an undercount in the Census is reflected in the population estimates for a decade.

I am here today to let you know that the Children's Leadership Council is beginning a multi-pronged project to alert our members to this issue and to mobilize organizations in our coalition to help reduce the high net undercount of young children in the 2020 Census.

As noted earlier in my testimony, numerous CLC members focus solely or primarily on America's youngest children. However, even CLC members that do not focus solely or primarily on young children care about the well-being of all of our nation's youngest, and thus have an interest in ensuring this population has the resources and opportunities they need to survive and thrive.



Over the next few years, the CLC will raise this issue at our conferences and meetings; we will hold webinars with our members; we will send out material to help our members better understand the issue; and we will help them get involved in the 2020 Census in ways that can help mitigate this problem. And we look forward to working with the Census Bureau to reduce the high net undercount of young children in the 2020 Census.

Table 1. Key Facts on the undercount of young children in the U.S. Decennial Census

- 1) In the 2010 Census, children age 0 to 4 had a net undercount rate of 4.6%, which is much higher than any other age group.
- 2) In the 2010 Census, children age 0 to 4 had a net undercount of almost one million people (970,000).
- 3) The net undercount rate is the difference between erroneous inclusions (mostly people counted twice) and omissions (those left out of the Census). In the 2010 Census, there were 2.2 million children age 0 to 4 left out of the Census. This amounts to 10.2 percent of all young children.
- 4) The net undercount of young children has increased from 1.4 percent in the 1980 Census to 4.6 percent in the 2010 Census.
- 5) The net undercount for Black children age 0-4 was 6.5 percent and the net undercount of Hispanic children was 7.5 percent in the 2010 Census.
- 6) Large counties (those of 500,000 or more people) account for more than 80 percent of the net undercount of young children in the 2010 Census.
- 7) The ten largest counties had an aggregate net undercount rate of 11 percent in the 2010 Census.

Table 2. Six Federal Assistance Programs Using Population Age 0 to 5 in the Distribution Formula

	FY2008 (in billions)
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC Program)	\$6.10
Head Start	\$5.70
Child Care and Development Block Grant	\$2.00
Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant to the States	\$0.50
Special Education - Grants for Infants and Families with Disabilities	\$0.40
Special Education - Preschool Grants	\$0.40
TOTAL	\$15.10

Source: Surveying For Dollars, Andrew Reamer, The Brookings Institution
<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2010/07/26-ac-s-reamer>