

The Census Bureau cited the importance of using one's "usual residence" in their decision to continue to count prisoners in the cells they currently serve their time when the 2020 Census is administered. Yet, if the Census Bureau is truly interested in recording inmates at their "usual residence" (defined as where they "live and sleep most of the time") prisons, and certainly jails, are NOT where prisoners spend most of their time (time being the 10 years for which their body count in the Census affects policy). Although "the average length of time served by federal inmates more than doubled from 1988 to 2012, rising from 17.9 to 37.5 months" that still means that the average felon served only slightly over three years in prison (less than a third of the time that the Census, with its decade long influence, would have inmates counting the prison as their usual residence). "Prison Time Surges for Federal Inmates November, 18 2015 Public Safety Performance project PEW Charitable Trusts <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2015/11/prison-time-surges-for-federal-inmates> And ALL jailed inmates serve less an a year (that is less than a tenth of the time the Census would record them living their if they choose to continue counting prisoners as residents of the communities outside the prison walls which prisoners have no stake in). I hope that this comment and others like it will have a real impact on the Census Bureau's decision. Although, I am skeptical, considering that the Census Bureau elected to disregard the vast majority of comments on the 2010 Census's recording methods regarding prisoners who argued for their residencies to be marked in their home communities. "Of the 162 comments pertaining to prisoners, 156 suggested that prisoners should be counted at their home or pre-incarceration address," leaving only 6 individuals who disagreed. Ironically, it is this very disproportionate sway of the few over the many which counting prisoners as residents of the jails and prisons they temporarily reside in ensures. For instance, because the state of Rhode Island had only one prison located in Cranston's Ward 6, "Every seven voters in Ward 6 [Cranston, RI] had the same political power as 10 voters in the city's other wards." "The Wrong Way to count Prisoners" 7/15/16 NY Times http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/16/opinion/the-wrong-way-to-count-prisoners.html?_r=2 This violates the US constitutional commitment to one person, one vote for which we fought a Revolution! It is not, as opposition argued, giving undue advantage to correctly count prisoners in the place they have the greatest stake and will likely spend the most time in the ten years for which the Census holds influence it is in fact the other way around, counting prisoners as residents of communities they can not participate in and do not likely have family living in gives undue political power to those communities that house prisons.

Sincerely,

Emma York

Williams College Class of 2019