



THE
INTERFAITH ALLIANCE
of New York State
PROTECTING FAITH AND FREEDOM
www.tianys.org

The Interfaith Alliance of NYS, Inc.
Capital District Chapter
USPS Post Office – Styvesant Plaza
PO Box 38168
Albany, NY 12203

August 30, 2016

Dear Census Director:

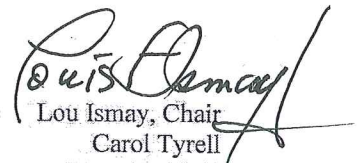
The Interfaith Alliance of NYS, Inc., (TIANYS) along with “hundreds of allies around the country, are profoundly disappointed by the Census Bureau proposal to again count nearly 2 million people in the wrong place on Census day. Continuing this outdated practice will ensure an inaccurate 2020 Census and another decade of prison gerrymandering.”

We stand by Prisoners of the Census Executive Director, Peter Wagner’s following letter. TIANYS is concerned about the impact of the Bureau’s decision to continue to count incarcerated persons as “residents” of the prison location instead of their home communities for several reasons which are highlighted further in Mr. Wagner’s letter.

The reasoning is this: “The Census Bureau blatantly ignored the 96% overwhelming consensus urging a change in the Census count for incarcerated persons. This policy perpetuates the distortion of democracy that results from padding the population counts of communities with prisons. It seriously distorts redistricting at the local level of county commissions, city councils, and school boards. It also harms urban communities by not crediting them with the incarcerated population whose legal residence never changed. It creates legislative problems resulting in constitutional violations of one person, one vote requirements. And most disappointing, because it so clearly harms communities of colour by reducing the accuracy of Census data about communities of colour. Due to the fact that “African-Americans and Latinos are disproportionately incarcerated, counting incarcerated people in the wrong location is particularly bad for proper representation of African-American and Latino communities.”

This on-going practice is not only morally wrong, but a true social injustice because it denies home communities of the resources needed to improve their already failing infrastructure. As people of many worldviews, we still know what injustice looks like, and will stand with, and support those who are targeted by these policies.

Respectfully yours in faith & peace,
The Executive Board of TIANYS,


Lou Ismay, Chair
Carol Tyrell
Florence Skiff
Derek J. Healey

“Counting incarcerated people as if they were “residents” of the correctional facility makes the Census less accurate for everyone: rural and urban communities; incarcerated persons and their families; governmental authorities trying to draw accurate redistricting plans like the Department of Health; anthropologists and researchers trying to understand the demographics and disparities of local communities.” - Peter Wagner