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## Rhode Island's Census Adjustment Act

### The problem

The Census Bureau counts incarcerated people as residents of the communities where prisons are based, as opposed to their home addresses. Rhode Island law says that "confinement in a correctional facility" does not change a residence. The U.S. Census, however, counts people where they are incarcerated. Counting incarcerated people as if they were residents of Cranston for redistricting purposes distorts democracy at both the state and local levels.

### The solution

Senator Harold M. Metts has introduced legislation (S 0340) that will address this critical issue. The legislation would require Rhode Island to adjust the Census figures to draw districts based on people in prison being counted in their home communities. The bills apply to both state and local redistricting.

### Who do the bills benefit?

- Residents of Providence, which incarcerated people in prison disproportionately call home, will get the representation they deserve in the state legislature.
- Everyone who does not live immediately adjacent to a prison will benefit in the state legislature because the districts with prisons in Cranston will no longer have enhanced representation.
- The residents of Cranston's Wards 1,2,3,4, and 5 will benefit because Ward 6 will no longer have enhanced representation in city government.

### Bill Summary

The law would require the state to collect and maintain home address data for each incarcerated person. The state would then use this information to adjust the Census data, and provide the corrected data to state and local redistricting bodies. This adjusted data from the state will be used to draw state and local districts when redistricting.

### Rhode Island should join the leaders of Census reform

On April 13, 2010, Maryland became the first state in the nation to pass a law requiring that people in prison be counted as residents of their home addresses for redistricting purposes. Delaware passed similar legislation in June, and New York in August 2010. Additionally, more than 100 rural communities with large prisons already manually adjust the Census to remove prison populations. By adjusting the census data, the counties avoid making the mistake seen in Cranston where the residents of Ward 6 are given extra representation in the city council by virtue of the ward containing large prisons filled with residents from somewhere else.

### Maryland's solution

#### No Representation Without Population Act

Maryland is the first state to pledge to collect the home addresses of incarcerated people and correct redistricting data state-wide.

Maryland recently passed legislation (H.B.496/S.B.400) requiring the state to collect home addresses for people who were counted in prison by the Census Bureau.

Maryland will use this information to adjust the redistricting data provided by the Census Bureau.