

The Pennsylvania  
**PRISON SOCIETY**  
S I N C E 1 7 8 7

August 15, 2016

Karen Humes  
Chief, Population Division  
U.S. Census Bureau, Room 5H174  
Washington DC 20233

Dear Karen Humes,

The Pennsylvania Prison Society submits this comment in response to the Census Bureau's federal register notice regarding the Residence Rule and Residence Situations, 81 FR 42577 (June 30, 2016). The Society urges you to count incarcerated people at their home address, rather than at the particular facility where they happen to be located on Census day.

The Prison Society, founded in 1787, is the oldest prison reform organization in the world. We have continued our mission of humane treatment and justice for over two centuries. We now provide reentry services to men and women incarcerated in Pennsylvania state correctional institutions and county jails. We also provide services to families of inmates. The families often undergo hardships while their loved ones are incarcerated. The neighborhoods they live in also need resources. These communities need support and representation.

As you know, American demographics and living situations have changed drastically in the 225 years since the first Census, and the Census has evolved in response to many of these changes in order to continue to provide an accurate picture of the nation. Today, the growth in the prison population requires the Census to update its methodology again. In Pennsylvania alone, there are nearly 50,000 men and women in the state system.

The need for change in the "usual residence" rule, as it relates to incarcerated persons, has been growing over the last few decades. As recently as the 1980s, the incarcerated population in the U.S. totaled less than half a million. But since then, the number of incarcerated people has more than quadrupled, to over two million people behind bars. The manner in which this population is counted now has huge implications for the accuracy of the Census.

By designating a prison cell as a residence in the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau concentrated a population that is disproportionately male, urban, and African-American or Latino into just 5,393 Census blocks that are located far from the actual homes of incarcerated people. When this is used for redistricting, prisons inflate the political power of those people who live near them.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Residence Rule and Residence Situations as the Bureau strives to count everyone in the right place in keeping with change in society and population realities. Because the Pennsylvania Prison Society believes in a population count that accurately represents communities, we urge you to count incarcerated people as residents of their home address.

Sincerely,



Ann Schwartzman  
Executive Director