

July 20, 2015

Dear Karen Humes,

I submit this comment in response to the Census Bureau's federal register notice regarding the Residence Rule and Residence Situations, 80 FR 28950 (May 20, 2015). I urge you to count incarcerated people at their home address, rather than at the particular facility that they happen to be located at on Census day.

My name is Russell Havens, and I am a former Beauregard Parish, Louisiana school board member. As someone who represented what was considered a minority district that housed a prison, I am troubled by the way that incarcerated people are counted as residents of wherever they are imprisoned. As a minority myself, an American Indian, I believe that it is invaluable to our democracy that redistricting allows for equal representation of all people, and prison gerrymandering stands in the way of this.

Because of the way incarcerated people are counted as residents of the particular facility that they happen to be imprisoned at on Census day, the people who live near Phelps Correctional in Beauregard Parish have greater political clout than those who do not for the sole reason that they happen to live near the prison. I represented the district that housed Phelps Correctional, and it was clear that the approximately 900 people imprisoned in this district were being counted in the wrong place.

Another detriment of having the prison population count in my district is that it has limited my school enrollment to approximately 292 students. This school is a Pre-Kindergarten thru 12th grade school. The students in my district are not offered music past elementary, art, band nor football to list a few of the programs that are offered at **ALL** of the other Jr. High and High Schools in the Beauregard Parish School System. Bond Taxes are forced on my district thru millage, knowing that we are starting 900 votes short on any election therefore we do not have the votes to vote it down even if every voter turned out. Over \$8 million was forced upon my district last bond election with very little being spent at our school. The bond tax previous to the \$8 million one was for \$22 million and out of that only \$1,200.00 was spent in my school. Starting out any election 900 votes short we do not have any choice in these millage taxes being levied against my district. We are rural and my district is where the millage tax comes from. This is

TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!!! 900 NO votes would cancel any tax in this parish. Not only is this affecting our voice it is affecting millions of local dollars also.

In 2012, our school board evaluated two redistricting plans including one that would have excluded the Phelps Correctional population. I had hoped that my parish school board would follow the police juries in Avoyelles, Caldwell, Claiborne, Concordia, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Grant, La Salle, Richland , West Carroll, West Feliciana , and Winn Parishes as well as the council-president in Iberville and adjust your Census counts of the prison population to avoid prison gerrymandering.

Unfortunately, my colleagues on the school board voted for the plan that gives the district I represented unearned influence. I believe that many of my colleagues voted for the redistricting plan that used the prison population not out of any belief that people incarcerated there had anything to do with the administration of education in the school board but out of fear that by voting against prison gerrymandering they would somehow complicate negotiations to save the prison from closure. I saw that decision as unrelated; and the fact that the prison did close and is now in the process of reopening in a new and smaller form does illustrate that not only are the people who were confined in my district rather transient, so is the actual facility.

To repeat in another way, my school board engaged in prison gerrymandering to give extra representation to the one district that didn't want the extra representation; and it did so using a prison population that it knew was expected to cease to exist in our Parish.

For these reasons I urge you to count incarcerated people at their home addresses so that Parishes and School Boards like mine won't have to go through this unnecessary debate in the future. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Havens, Jr.