



## **MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT**

### **Intro. No. 1225-2025 (Menin)**

September 15, 2025

#### **TITLE OF BILL**

A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to establishing an office of the census

#### **SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS**

This bill would create a new office of the census, tasked with serving as a liaison between the City and the New York regional office of the United States census bureau, identifying hard to count areas and populations, creating census public awareness campaigns, and working with civic and community leaders to promote awareness. The office would be temporary, established no earlier than two and a half years before each federal decennial census and ending six months after census field operations end. The office's director would be appointed by the mayor.

#### **STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**

The decennial census determines ten years' worth of federal funding for programs such as food assistance for needy families, early childhood education for low-income children, and maintenance of bridges and roads. It also affects the number of congressional seats allocated to each state and its influence in the Electoral College. A low count in New York City and State can cost New Yorkers representation in Congress and billions of dollars in federal aid.

Achieving a full and accurate census count in New York City is especially challenging. The City is home to many hard-to-count communities, including immigrants, non-English-speaking residents, and children. Additionally, the Trump administration demonstrated a willingness to suppress participation in areas like New York, which have large immigrant populations. This was evident before the 2020 Census and has continued under the current administration. Efforts include [disbanding](#) Census Bureau external advisory groups, cutting the Bureau's budget, [pursuing](#) legal and administrative actions to exclude non-citizens from the count, [eliminating](#) access to census data, and more. Federal funds for community-based outreach programs, which previously helped boost census participation, were eliminated even before the 2020 Census.

New York City can confront these threats and ensure an accurate count by leading a comprehensive, effective, and well-resourced campaign ahead of the next census. The 2020 Census offers a blueprint: a dedicated operation within City Hall, a large-scale housing unit survey conducted by the Department of City Planning, timely budget allocations to trusted community-based organizations, and collaboration

with civic organizations, cultural institutions, commercial groups, and others all helped the City exceed expectations in counting and responding, despite the challenges of the pandemic. Council Member Julie Menin, who introduced this bill, served as NYC Census Director during that period.

Citizens Union played a key role in advocating for the City and State to adequately fund census outreach, working with elected officials and civic leaders to create a comprehensive response plan, and supporting efforts to achieve an accurate count in 2020.

Intro. 1225-2025 wisely builds on the efforts made during the last decennial census. It would codify the need for a dedicated Office of the Census, which would serve as a convener and coordinator of various census efforts. Importantly, the legislation acknowledges the essential role of trusted community-based organizations in hard-to-count communities by mandating that the office identify and work with leaders in those communities and create multilingual campaigns aimed at increasing participation in those areas.

The census is more than a headcount - it is a foundation for democracy and political power. Given the high stakes involved in achieving an accurate count and the challenges facing the 2030 Census, New York City must make census planning a priority. Intro. 1225-2025 begins that process. Citizens Union urges the New York City Council to pass this bill.

For further information, please contact Ben Weinberg, Director of Public Policy, at [bweinberg@citizensunion.org](mailto:bweinberg@citizensunion.org).