

From: Tony Coelho <hontonycoelho@gmail.com >
Sent: Tuesday, February 6, 2024 1:09 PM
Subject: Census decision is positive for people with disabilities!

Friends,

Today, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that they heard us and are acting on our recommendations. The process works when disability advocates come together to share their concerns with an administration that is sincere in its efforts to address disability issues. I am so grateful to everyone who participated in sending over 12,000 comments on the proposed changes to the U.S. Census, which had the impact we wanted.

U.S. Census Bureau announced that the anticipated 30-day Federal Register notice to be issued in the Spring will summarize the proposed 2025 ACS content and will not include any changes to the existing disability questions. The Census Bureau will then review the feedback and submit the final proposed content for OMB review and approval. I was pleased to learn that the Census Bureau, NCHS and OMB also plan to convene a meeting in the Spring with federal agency disability stakeholders, disability community representatives, data users, researchers and disability advocates. They have stated that the purpose is to discuss data needs and data uses surrounding the topic of disability. I look forward to learning more about that meeting as it is planned.

In the long-term, the U.S. Census Bureau announced efforts to improve their process by recommending the ICSP-SACS consider revisions to their protocols to enhance collaboration with data users and other stakeholders at the beginning of, and during, the ACS content change process. It is my hope that a more robust engagement process going forward will lead to development of better disability measures based on community perspectives.

This is a great victory for the disability community and a lesson for our community that it matters very much who is in a position to hear our concerns and act on our recommendations. I am grateful to President Joe Biden for his continued work on behalf of the disability community and the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, Robert Santos, for listening to the disability community and taking our recommendations seriously.

In solidarity,

Tony Coelho