

Oversight and Government Reform Hearing: "Is Brooklyn Being Counted? - Problems with the 2010 Census" Opening

Remarks:

- First I would like to thank Chairman Towns for inviting me to sit in on this hearing regarding a very pressing and important issue affecting my district, the Brooklyn community and the Greater New York Area. I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues, Congressmen Rangel, Clay, and McMahon, including the other elected officials and special guests joining us today.
- As the Representative of the 11th Congressional District, I have been diligent in rallying my constituency to fully participate in the Census process. That is why I am very concerned about the recent incidences of fraud that we are here to discuss.
- Like many of my colleagues in the New York Congressional delegation, I represent an extremely diverse constituency. According to the Census Bureau's 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, the total population of my district is roughly 700,000. Approximately 39% of this population are foreign-born immigrants from all over the world.
- Approximately 47% of the immigrant population that settled in my district between 1980 and 2008 has yet to obtain naturalized citizenship. They are currently legal permanent residents, have some other legal visa designation, or are undocumented.
- This extremely vulnerable population is already concerned with sharing private information with government entities for fear of compromising their immigration status. Therefore, when incidences of fraud arise regarding Census information, I am deeply troubled by the potential impact it has on their fragile participation rate.
- As a result, an accurate count of the residents in our districts, the integrity of the process and the direly needed resources to our districts are further compromised.
- Moreover, since the incidences of fraud were exposed by an honest employee, I am concerned about the unknown rate of fraud that has yet to be exposed.
- It is my hope that through this hearing the Congressional Oversight Committee, my colleagues and I gain insight into ways in which we can mitigate the occurrence of fraud for future Censuses. The people of my district and of Brooklyn heavily rely on it.