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House Votes to Protect Integrity of 2010 Census Mailings

WASHINGTON – The U.S. House of Representatives today voted to protect the integrity of the 2010 Census and limit any confusion that a deceptive look-alike mailing could cause, effectively saving taxpayer dollars. H.R. 4621, the “Prevent Deceptive Census Look Alike Mailing Act,” is bipartisan legislation that establishes clear guidelines for any mailing marked “census.” The bill passed the House by a vote of 416 to 0.

Led by Chairman Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY), an original cosponsor of the H.R. 4621, the House Committee on Oversight and Government reform last week passed the legislation by a bipartisan voice vote. Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Information Policy, Census and National Archives Subcommittee Chairman Wm. Lacy Clay (D-MO) also spearheaded the bill.

In recent months, several political and non-profit organizations have distributed misleading mailings with the word “Census” on the envelope, and included forms designed to resemble the official census form within the mailing. H.R. 4621 would require any mailing with an envelope marked “Census” to clearly indicate the sender and return address, and it would trigger an existing requirement in federal law to include a disclaimer that the mailing is not affiliated with the federal government.

“I am committed to protecting the integrity of the 2010 Census and ensuring a fair and accurate count,” said Chairman Towns. “My home district in Brooklyn, New York, suffered from back-to-back undercounts that prevented critical resources from reaching our community. That is why I believe it is critically important Congress does everything possible to promote participation in the census, including eliminating deceptive practices.”

Every percentage decrease in the response rate of the 2010 Census mailer costs the US Census Bureau an additional \$85 million to send enumerators to the homes of those people who do not respond to the mailing. The U.S. government is already spending hundreds of millions of dollars to make sure that when the American people get their census forms, they fill it out and mail it back.

“As Census day approaches, we must enact these simple measures to protect the 2010 count,” said Chairman Towns.

The bill now moves to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

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