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Alabama may lose big if 2020 Census isn't properly funded, study finds
Undercount of state population could fuel cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, housing for low-income families

The results of the 2020 Census will help guide the allocation of more than $7.5 billion in federal funding for Alabama each year. But an undercount of the state's population could put a huge amount of that support at risk over the next decade, according to "Counting for Dollars 2020," a new study led by Professor Andrew Reamer of George Washington University (GWU).

Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP) has teamed with the Census Project to call on Alabamians to demand that Congress provide full Census funding in the 2018 federal budget to help ensure the state's population is properly counted in 2020.

"Alabama can't afford to be undercounted in the upcoming Census," ACPP executive director Kimble Forrister said. "Investments in Medicaid, housing and transportation make Alabama a better place to live and work, and we need to ensure our state doesn't get shortchanged on the federal funding that helps make those services possible."

The GWU report contains a 50-state listing of funds that are directed to state and local governments based on Census data. The list includes money for vital services such as health care, Head Start, roads and highways, school lunch programs and housing assistance. A summary of the national findings calculated $589.7 billion in Census-directed funding from 16 federal programs in 2015.

Phil Sparks of the Census Project said Alabama had much to lose from a poorly planned Census count. "The state has a lot at stake in this debate," Sparks said. "All Alabamians benefit from a high-quality, complete and fair Census."

While the study focused on 16 federal programs, five account for most federal funding to Alabama: Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, Medicare Part B, HUD Section 8 Housing Vouchers, and Department of Transportation Highway Planning and Construction Funds.

"The fair and equitable distribution of federal financial assistance to state and local governments and households will depend on the accuracy of the 2020 Census," Reamer said.

Detailed findings on each of the 16 programs the group has researched can be found below:

Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid)
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Medicare Part B (Supplemental Medical Insurance) – Physicians Fee Schedule Services
Highway Planning and Construction
Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies
National School Lunch Program
Special Education Grants (IDEA)
State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program (Project-based)
Head Start/Early Head Start
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
Foster Care (Title IV-E)
Health Center Programs (Community, Migrant, Homeless, Public Housing)
Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
Child Care and Development Fund

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Arise Citizens' Policy Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of congregations, organizations and individuals promoting public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians. **The Census Project** is a broad-based network of national, state and local organizations that supports a fair and accurate 2020 Census and comprehensive American Community Survey.