

# Why is Trump wrecking the census?

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Census sabotage disguises the extent of poverty in the U.S.

The 2020 U.S. census failed to count millions of people despite the best efforts of Census Bureau employees. Black, Indigenous and Latinx people — and poor people in general — were most likely to be missed. Deliberate sabotage by the Trump

regime is to blame.

Schools and cities will be cheated out of federal funds. Some states, including Rhode Island, may be unfairly deprived of seats in the House of Representatives.

Since the initial census in 1790, this is the first one that has been carried out while a pandemic was raging. There were Indigenous people living on reservations that census takers weren't able to reach.

Six percent of people in northwestern Louisiana haven't been counted. Jackson, Miss., Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba estimates that the Black-majority city loses \$1,000 in funding for every person not counted.

Obviously the census needed more time. [Mayor Lumumba thinks](#) that just another two weeks would have been enough to complete the job.

The Trump administration refused, and on Oct. 13 a [majority of the U.S. Supreme Court](#) agreed to terminate the census. Justice Sonia Sotomayor disagreed. She said that "the harms associated with an inaccurate census are avoidable and intolerable."

For more than a year, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross — whose department oversees the census — tried to include [questions about citizenship and immigration status](#). This attempt to intimidate millions of workers from filling out the census was stopped by the courts.

Ross was trying to duplicate what Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani did in his 1993 New York City mayoral campaign. Giuliani had Roosevelt Avenue in heavily immigrant populated Jackson Heights, Queens, plastered with posters, warning of penalties for "vote fraud." The effort was meant to frighten immigrant voters from going to the polls.

Now, Ross is trying to stop undocumented immigrants from being counted for purposes of congressional apportionment. If Ross is successful, California, New Jersey and Texas may each [lose a congressional seat](#).

That's illegal even according to a constitution which was originally [written by slave owners and rich merchants](#). It's typical behavior for [vulture capitalist Wilbur Ross](#), who cheated thousands of retired Bethlehem Steel workers out of their medical benefits.

## **Statistics and the class struggle**

The capitalist government can count turnips but not homeless people. According to Table 38 of the [2012 census of agriculture](#), there were 4,285 acres of turnips in the United States.

But the only reference to homeless people in the 2012 Statistical Abstract of the United States was in Table 575, which gives the number of beds in homeless shelters.

Speculators betting on food prices at Chicago's Board of Trade need to know about crops so they can make a killing from poor harvests and hungry people. They don't want to find out how many homeless children there are.

Such information is embarrassing and considered dangerous to their class rule. The response of capitalists to growing poverty is to suppress news of it.

The 131st edition of the Statistical Abstract that came out in 2012 was the last one published. Government bookstores in federal buildings were shut down. Even if all the same statistics and information are available online, it's still a retreat from the people's right to know.

The coronavirus tragedy is the latest example of this war on truth. [Trump made the](#)

[fantastic claim](#) that hospitals were inflating the figure of COVID-19 deaths to be larger than they really were.

A big reason for the much higher rates of COVID-19 cases in Black and Latinx communities is overcrowded housing. High rents cause this housing crisis. Many families have to double up because a sister or brother was evicted.

The government labels these doubled-up families as “related subfamilies.” Their estimated number grew almost fourfold from 1980 to 2010, from 1.15 million to 4.3 million families. (Table 59 in the 2012 Statistical Abstract)

That’s over 20 million people living in cramped conditions. The number must have increased in the past decade because of the economic crisis. But the latest figures are ten years old.

### **Disguising poverty**

Workers at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, like those at the Census Bureau, want to do the best job. But the unemployment figures usually cited in the media greatly undercount the actual number of jobless workers.

That’s because if someone works just one hour a week, they’re not officially unemployed. While the BLS also gives figures for those working part time who want full-time jobs, the media give these statistics second billing.

The millions who are not actively looking for work because of health or family reasons are not included in the most cited unemployment rate. Neither are the over two million people in prison, most of whom work for pennies an hour.

Despite these limitations, President Richard Nixon thought the BLS unemployment figures during a recession in 1971 were suspiciously high. [Nixon blamed “a Jewish Cabal”](#) within the BLS and demanded the firing of Jewish employees.

This grotesque bigotry didn't stop Nixon from shoveling billions to the apartheid state occupying Palestine.

In the late 1890s, V.I. Lenin — the future leader of the Bolshevik Revolution — wrote “The Development of Capitalism in Russia” while in Siberian exile. He wrote about the difficulty of getting accurate statistics.

The labor and people's movements can't depend on the capitalists to reveal the truth either. We need to gather our own honest statistics on rising rents, homelessness, unemployment, inflation and poverty.

