



United States[™] Census Bureau



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Dear Law Enforcement Professional,

During the 2010 Census, over 700 acts of violence against Census Bureau employees were reported throughout the United States. These included the discharge of firearms at and physical assaults of Census takers, as well as robberies, carjackings, and kidnapping of these dedicated civil servants. While some crimes were ultimately investigated and successfully prosecuted, others were not.

The data collected by Census employees contribute to the most significant statistical reports used by American businesses and government entities. During the 2010 Census, nearly half a million Census employees worked in neighborhoods throughout our nation. Between decennial censuses, however, thousands of other Census employees continue to work in your community nearly every day gathering data for other essential economic, labor, and demographic purposes. Pursuant to Title 13 of the United States Code, Census employees are expected to approach homes and businesses seeking this information, and property owners are expected to provide such information (13 USC §223). Most survey requests seek voluntary participation; one, the American Community Survey, has mandatory participation under the law.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) at the U.S. Department of Commerce is a federal law enforcement agency within the Commerce Department, which is also home to the Census Bureau. This letter seeks your assistance in keeping our Census Bureau workers safe by aggressively pursuing prosecution of violent crimes against them and their property. While assault of a Census employee is also a federal crime, it is most often successfully prosecuted at the local level. For instance, a state grand jury in Georgia recently indicted a man for assault and destruction of property involving a Census employee on the job. The defendant allegedly beat and stabbed the employee with a knife, and damaged the employee's car including slashing a tire.

As a law enforcement professional, you know the inherent safety and security uncertainties of approaching a residence or establishment, yet this is what is expected of Census employees on a continual basis. Although the vast majority of residential and business property occupants are cooperative and helpful, the risk of hostility toward Census workers exists nonetheless. Accordingly, we ask that you and your organizations aid in the detection, reporting, and prosecution of crimes of violence against Census workers.

Thank you for sharing this letter with your officers and deputies, and we encourage you to contact OIG any time via its hotline: 1-800-424-5197.

Sincerely,

Todd J. Zinser
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Commerce

Robert M. Groves
Director
U.S. Census Bureau