October 26, 2026

Re: Docket No. 260903-0005, RIN 0607-AA75, Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Decennial Census of the Population of Americans; Proposed Residence Criteria and Proposed Regulations for Demographic Questions

ACT for Alexandria is a community foundation committed to amplifying the work of our community by bringing people and resources together. We write to express our opposition to the proposed changes to the 2030 Census and urge the Census Bureau to preserve a complete, accurate, and inclusive count of everyone who lives in our communities.

For Alexandria, an accurate census is essential. Our city is home to a diverse population, including immigrants, families, seniors, renters, homeowners, students, and workers with a wide range of economic circumstances. Census data shape political representation and inform the allocation of federal resources that support housing, transportation, education, health care, and human services. They also help local government, nonprofits, and community organizations understand who lives in Alexandria, identify disparities, plan for changing needs, and direct resources where they are needed most.

The need for an accurate count is particularly urgent because some of the people most likely to be missed are already being undercounted. According to Voices for Virginia's Children, approximately one million children under age five were missed during the 2020 Census, a 5.46% undercount, the largest undercount of young children since 1970. In Virginia, 30,000 babies, toddlers, and preschoolers were not counted in 2020. An inaccurate count can affect population estimates and resource decisions for years to come.

An incomplete count can have real consequences for a community's ability to meet residents' needs. Census data help guide the distribution of federal resources for programs including Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), SNAP, Head Start, school meals, childcare, and special education. When people are missed, the data used to make decisions about their communities may not accurately reflect their needs.

We are also concerned about the proposal to eliminate questions about race and ethnicity. Alexandria needs reliable demographic data to understand how residents are faring in health, economic security, education, housing, and other indicators of well-being. These data help us identify who is experiencing disparities, understand whether public programs

and services are reaching the people they are intended to serve, and measure progress over time. Removing this information would make it more difficult to identify inequities, target resources effectively, and measure progress toward a more equitable community.

A successful census depends on trust. Changes that introduce questions about legal status or alter who is counted could discourage participation and undermine confidence in the census. A census that does not accurately reflect the people who live in our communities cannot provide the reliable foundation needed for effective planning, representation, and resource allocation.

At ACT for Alexandria, we believe every resident should have the opportunity to experience stability, opportunity, dignity, belonging, and power over their future. A complete and accurate census is foundational to that work. Every person who lives in Alexandria is part of our community and should be counted. We urge the Census Bureau to reject these proposed changes and ensure that the 2030 Census counts our community members accurately and completely.