



## Advocates for Ohio's Future

Amended Substitute HB 166, Main Operating Budget FY2020-FY2021  
Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee  
Interested Party Testimony - May 14, 2019

Chairman Schuring, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien and Members of the Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee, my name is Kelsey Bergfeld, and I am the Coalition Manager of Advocates for Ohio's Future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Amended Substitute House Bill 166, the main operating budget.

Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF) is a nonpartisan coalition of nearly 500 organizations that promotes health and human service budget and policy solutions so that all Ohioans live better lives. Our coalition believes in investing in our state's most valuable resource—our people—to ensure that they are safe, healthy, and can access pathways to prosperity for themselves and their families.

Ohio is less than a year away from the [2020 Census](#) count. Though the administration has taken several steps toward enacting a plan for census efforts, Ohio is significantly behind in efforts to ensure every person in every corner of our state is appropriately counted. **Ohio must allocate funds to develop and implement state and local Complete Count Commissions.**

In 2010, 80.8% of Ohio's households mailed back their 2010 census questionnaire, requiring more costly and difficult in-person follow up to find and count the remaining 19.2%. Based on the latest census estimates, approximately 12% of Ohio's current population (or 1,439,142 people) lives in [hard-to-count neighborhoods](#) - census tracts where almost a quarter or more households did not mail in their census questionnaire in 2010. Also, for the first time the Census Bureau will be urging most households to submit their census responses online via the internet. As recently as 2017, 19.3% of Ohio's households had either no internet subscription or dial-up only, according to the latest American Community Survey estimates<sup>1</sup>.

Without state-led, community driven efforts in hard-to-count neighborhoods, an untold number of children, people of color, and poor families without internet access in the state could be missed in the 2020 census, putting a fair and accurate count in jeopardy for Ohio. An inaccurate count could mean the loss of one or two Congressional representatives, and losses to the more than \$33.5 billion of federal funding distributed to Ohio based on the Census for important programs like highway planning and construction, Medicaid, housing, SNAP, foster care, business loans, and more. These programs strengthen Ohio's families and communities by helping people meet basic their needs while taking part in education and training opportunities on their path to self-sufficiency.

The House budget does not allocate funds dedicated to educational and accuracy efforts in hard to reach communities or fund dedicated DSA employees to staff the Complete Count Commission and coordinate agency efforts. Currently, proposed federal resources for the Census are estimated to be \$2 billion less than recommended.

We ask this committee commit \$2.65 million in GRF to the Development Services Agency to ensure each Ohioan is counted for the equitable and accurate distribution of public funds and the preservation of Ohio's representation in Congress.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/img/mappdfs/Ohio.pdf>