

Prince Frederick, MD - Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) met with Maryland faith leaders and coordinators of county Complete Count Committees at an event today focusing on the importance of the 2010 Census to Maryland. The meeting anticipates National Census Day, April 1, the date by which all households are asked to mail back their completed Census form. Rep. Hoyer urged local leaders to communicate the importance of the Census to their communities.

The longest-running national census in the world, the U.S. Census was mandated in the Constitution by America's Founders, who based representation in Congress on a fair and accurate count of population each year. Today, the Census affects much more than population: it is an essential tool for apportioning federal money, so that each community gets its fair share of funding for schools, highways, police protection, and more.

Census forms were mailed earlier this year to households with instructions to fill out 10 basic questions about the individuals living in each residence. The Census asks that forms be mailed back close to April 1- the national day marking the target mail date for forms. Households that do not mail back their forms will receive a visit by a Census employee from the community sometime between April and July to collect the Census information. The Census Bureau delivers official population counts to the President in December of this year.

“There is too much at stake for anyone to sit out the Census,” **said Rep. Hoyer.** “The information collected determines the amount of federal money states receive to support the roads we drive on, the schools our children learn in, and the police and fire departments that protect our homes. Representation and federal dollars are both based on population so if we want Maryland to get its fair share, we need to make sure that everyone in Maryland is counted.”

There are nine local Census offices in the State of Maryland with the La Plata office serving the Fifth Congressional District. It is estimated that the 2010 Census will create 18,250 jobs in Maryland between October 2009 and September 2010. As of Wednesday, March 31, Maryland's 2010 Census Participation Rate (the percentage of forms mailed back by households that received the form) was 51%. This is above the National Participation rate of

46%, but below some states such as North & South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Nebraska which have participation rates of 54-58%.

"The message is simple," **said Rep. Hoyer.** "To ensure that you and your family are counted in the 2010 Census, please fill out your forms today. Just 10 questions, 10 minutes - and mail it back. April 1 is National Census Day and a good point of reference for sending back your completed forms. Your answers are confidential, and your participation is vital."

Learn more at 2010census.gov

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