



Get Connected and Get Counted

By Senator Holly Mitchell

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Have you heard about the 2020 Census? I am sure you have received mail, phone calls, or maybe drove past a billboard with information on the Census. Do you still wonder what it is about and who gets counted? The new baby just born yesterday? She gets counted. Your Uncle Leroy who is 108 years old? He gets counted, too!

Every 10 years, people across the country fill out the Census to get an accurate count of all people in the United States. The Census determines California's federal funding for important community services that help support our families and determines fair representation in California and D.C.

Unless each person is counted – from old Uncle Leroy to our precious baby boys and girls – we will lose equal representation in Congress, and that will hit us hard.

Some people are nervous about filling out the Census, but there is nothing to be afraid of. The Census is safe and secure. Information collected in the Census cannot be shared with other governmental agencies or used against you in any way. There is no citizenship question and responses are confidential and only used for statistical purposes.



Senator Holly Mitchell (File photo)

Right now, California's response rate compared to our last Census is at a dismal 61 percent vs. 70 percent in 2010. My beloved Senate District 30 had one of the worst turnouts in the state, with only 48 percent of our population having completed the 2010 Census. The last time around, data shows African American people were **undercounted** nationwide by more than 800,000, many of whom were children.

We must do better and make sure Black counts!

Many of our resources cannot function without the vital federal funds provided by the Census for schools, childcare, housing, health clinics, social services, transportation, water infrastructure and more. The state received \$56 billion for Medi-Cal based on the 2010 Census data.

Simply put, we all must participate, or we will all suffer.

So what is the holdup? Why are Angelenos taking their time to fill out the Census forms either by mail, phone, or online? Maybe the low turnout is COVID-19 related, or maybe there is a link between the Census and closing the Digital Divide. We have to increase awareness of the connection between affordable internet programs and completing the Census. A 2019 **poll** from California Emerging Technology Fund found that **73 percent** of low-income people surveyed said they were unaware that lower prices were available to help **get connected** to the Internet.

What better way to invest in our children than to get affordable internet to everyone eligible while we secure our fair share of funding and equal political representation by achieving a complete Census count in California. These actions will help put our state on a path to equity and economic prosperity for all. Whether you live in a big city or small town, whether you are young or old, get counted California.

Resources: To learn about low-cost Internet options, text "Get Counted" to 5623-726925 or go visit www.GetConnectedGetCounted.org. To learn about completing the census online go to californiacensus.org or call 301-763-INFO.

A third-generation native Angeleno, Sen. Holly J. Mitchell is the proud daughter of career public servants and the protégé of community leaders who instilled in her a passion for service. Mitchell, the mother of a 19-year-old son, has devoted her professional life to creating a California where ALL children thrive. She continued her family legacy of leadership when she was named the first African American to chair the powerful Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee.

The Senator's groundbreaking successes include nearly 80 bills signed into law. These bills focus on improving human services, expanding access to healthcare, defending the civil rights of minorities and the undocumented, and reducing the numbers of children growing up in poverty.

In addition to her chairmanship on the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, she also chairs the Senate Select Committee on Social Determinants of Children's Well-Being and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.