

# Charities Ready to Aid Accurate Census

The Constitution's self-imposed obligation sounds pretty simple: every 10 years, count everyone. How hard can that be, especially in this day of sophisticated electronics and analytics? The second half of the requirement is where the devil hides in the details.

Forget the 18th century's spelling and capitalization, and start with the infamous 3/5ths opening to Article I, Section 2, that refers to how "those bound to Service for a Term of Years, three fifths of all other Persons," that is, slaves. What is apparently simple gets complicated, even after the elimination of slavery.

Taken together, these excerpts from the world's oldest continuously surviving constitution come alive every 10 years; 2020 is such a year.

And they interact. The number of representatives in Congress is capped at 435 to be "apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state ..."

Since it's estimated that for each person counted we gain \$1,500 per year and for each person missed we lose \$1,500 per year, Illinois must do everything possible to count every person living here. Communities across the Diocese of Rockford are urging a full count.

Humanitarian and faith-based organizations have contacts across the full range of residents, and Catholic Charities will urge participation and accurate information. We need to ensure *all* residents

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## Charitably Speaking



**by Patrick Winn**  
Director, Rockford Diocese  
Catholic Charities

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[pwinn@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:pwinn@rockforddiocese.org)

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The actual enumeration shall be made ... every Term of ten Years, in such Manner as (Congress) ... shall by law direct.

— Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States

Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state ...

— Amendment XIV Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States

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of our diocese are counted. Undercounting means more of the tax burden falls on the remaining population, even though financial resources diminish or stagnate.

Our census is not as onerous as Caesar's, that is by requiring everyone to return to an ancestral home. But it does require coordination and work to count every person — adults, children, babies; residents in long-term care facilities; abused or battered individuals living in secret or in shelters; prisoners; citizens and non-citizens alike; the homeless. All means all.

As Illinois leads the nation in lost population, it is projected that we will lose at least one Congressional representative. At stake is the loss of additional representation.

Irrespective of political beliefs or allegiances, only a complete count of *all* residents will give us a shot at financial reinvestment in the form of funds returned from taxes paid.

We endorse the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' teaching that "... responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation."

A full, accurate count is part of that. In this age of electronic data collection, fears about immigrant targeting and computer hacking of confidential information, Catholic Charities will participate to protect those who come to us for assistance and properly answer the call for a complete count.