MONTANA

PUBLIC COMMENTS THROUGH NOVEMBER 13, 2026

PROPOSED 2030 CENSUS RULE

WHAT THE PROPOSED RULE SAYS Published Sept. 10, 2026 (91 FR 57524). Comments closed Nov. 2, 2026.

Who is counted, and where (Part 60). People who are not U.S. citizens or green card holders, including students, workers on visas, refugees, and asylum seekers, would not be counted for apportionment (§ 60.4). Everyone else would be counted where they spent the most days from Jan. 3 to April 1, matched to tax records (§ 60.2, § 60.6).

What the census asks (Part 70). The form could not ask about race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, and only sex, date of birth, and household relationship would be required (§ 70.2). Demographic data could not be published if privacy protection would add any uncertainty to state or national counts (§ 70.3).

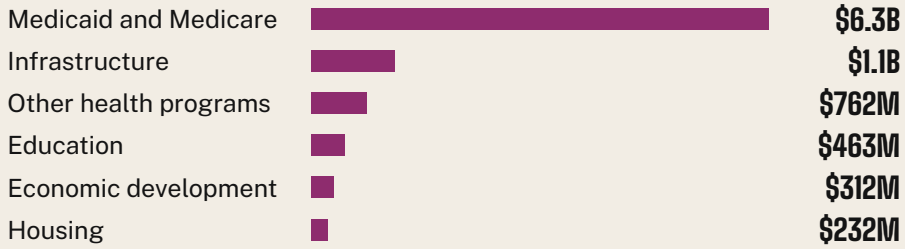
What it would mean: less accurate, less usable census data across the country.

WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR MONTANA

$9.1 billion

of federal spending guided by census data went to Montana in fiscal year 2023, through 371 programs. That is the 8th smallest of 50 states and DC.

WHERE THAT MONEY WENT



POGO's rough rule of thumb: missing 1% of Montana's residents could shift about **$91 million a year** until the next census. The real effect varies by program and by who is missed. Some programs count in more than one category. **SOURCES:** Sean Moulton and Janice Luong, "Census Matters: Why an Accurate Count Is Essential to Funding Our Communities" (POGO, Oct. 28, 2025) and its Montana fact sheet; Janice Luong and Sean Moulton, "How to Use POGO's Census Funding Data" (POGO, Mar. 19, 2026).

WHAT MONTANA TOLD THE CENSUS BUREAU

414 comments came from Montana. **95% opposed the rule**. Of all comments that name a state, 97% opposed; of all comments, 88%.

414
COMMENTS
12th fewest of 50 states and DC

95%
OPPOSED THE RULE
395 comments opposed; 19 supported

36
PER 100,000 RESIDENTS
12th highest of 50 states and DC; the median is 28

63
ASKED FOR MORE TIME
to comment on the rule

ISSUES MONTANA COMMENTERS RAISED MOST

Share of comments raising each issue. Montana | All comments that name a state



HOW TO READ THESE NUMBERS

Every published comment counts once, including each copy of a form letter. Position is inferred from each comment by the comment analysis. State is inferred from the comment text and is subject to error. About 62% of all 148,532 comments name a state, so state totals undercount. Most comments that support the rule (85%) name no state, so Montana is compared with all comments that name a state. The government and organization lists on page 2 are a sample, not everyone who commented; each was checked by reading the comment. Quotes are exact; individuals are described as they describe themselves.

A SAMPLE OF MONTANA GOVERNMENTS AND OFFICIALS WITH OPPOSING COMMENTS

TRIBAL NATIONS
Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Fort Belknap Indian Community

ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
Montana League of Cities and Towns

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND REGIONAL AGENCIES
Blaine County
City of Missoula (mayor)
Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization

A SAMPLE OF MONTANA ORGANIZATIONS WITH OPPOSING COMMENTS

Montana Budget & Policy Center
Montana Nonprofit Association
Headwaters Foundation
North Central Independent Living Services, Inc.

IN THEIR WORDS: OPPOSING COMMENTS FROM MONTANA

> *"Removing race and ethnicity questions, which have been asked since 1790, is of particular concern in Montana, home to seven reservations and twelve Tribal Nations."*
>
> **Montana League of Cities and Towns**
> members range from Billings to towns under 100 people · Comment 144837

> *"The reality is that the impacts of the Census Bureau's proposed changes, if implemented, would be far-reaching and likely devastating to Indian Country."*
>
> **Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes**
> 1.3-million-acre Flathead Indian Reservation · Comment 147218

> *"Regardless of immigration or citizen status, the constitution clearly stated that it is "persons" not citizens in the count."*
>
> **Grandchild of a Blackfoot tribal member in Montana**
> writing as an individual · Comment 116358

> *"Missoula is home to one of Montana's largest universities with a population of 11,319 students, which according to the Census, accounts for approximately 14% of the City's population. Even modest nationwide changes in residence criteria could have [...] substantial local effects."*
>
> **City of Missoula, mayor**
> home to one of Montana's largest universities · Comment 127067

> *"They will provide inadequate data, especially for those of us who live in Indian country and want to help our natives. What is the point of this? Please focus on getting your census takers to reach every household, including the back country of Montana."*
>
> **Montana resident living in Indian Country**
> writing as an individual · Comment 26054

> *"Western Montana lost a congressional representative in 1990 and we have only recently gotten that seat back. COUNT EVERYONE!"*
>
> **Western Montana resident**
> 2000 census taker on a reservation; writing as an individual · Comment 135062

> *"I live in Montana and there are a large number of people who go to warmer places during the winter months, but live the majority of the year in Montana."*
>
> **Montana resident**
> writing as an individual · Comment 62705

> *"I care about a fair and accurate census because 8 different farmers in this town of less than 1000 have H2 workers working on their farms. [...] This is hundreds of people in 1 small town that simply would be ignored when it comes to an emergency, there simply will not be enough resources because the government will not know how many people are actually living and working on these very rural farms."*
>
> **Bartender in Savage, a town of under 1,000**
> writing as an individual · Comment 140075

Sources: public comments on docket USBC-2026-0628 at regulations.gov, as read and labeled by the analysts' comment analysis; position and state are inferred from each comment's text and are subject to error. Federal funding: Project On Government Oversight (POGO), Census Matters, Oct. 28, 2025 (fiscal year 2023 data). Prepared by Hands Off Our Census. Run Nov 23, 2026, 3:35 PM ET.

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