TENNESSEE

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 Demographic data could not be published if privacy protection would add any uncertainty to state or national counts (§ 70.3).

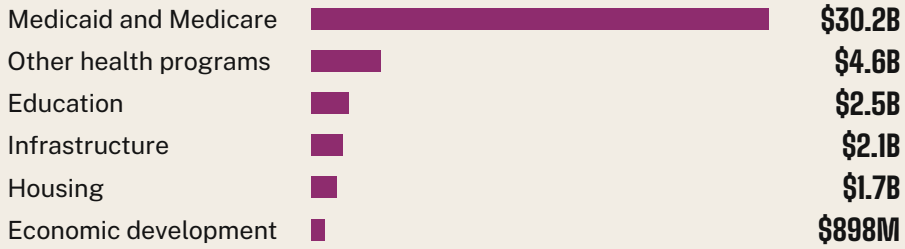
What it would mean: less accurate, less usable census data across the country.

WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR TENNESSEE

$40.6 billion

of federal spending guided by census data went to Tennessee in fiscal year 2023, through 371 programs. That is the 19th largest of 50 states and DC.

WHERE THAT MONEY WENT



POGO's rough rule of thumb: missing 1% of Tennessee's residents could shift about **$406 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 Tennessee fact sheet; Janice Luong and Sean Moulton, "How to Use POGO's Census Funding Data" (POGO, Mar. 19, 2026).

WHAT TENNESSEE TOLD THE CENSUS BUREAU

1,126 comments came from Tennessee. **97% opposed the rule**. Of all comments that name a state, 97% opposed; of all comments, 88%.

1,126
COMMENTS
24th most of 50 states and DC

97%
OPPOSED THE RULE
1,091 comments opposed; 34 supported

16
PER 100,000 RESIDENTS
8th lowest of 50 states and DC; the median is 28

123
ASKED FOR MORE TIME
to comment on the rule

ISSUES TENNESSEE COMMENTERS RAISED MOST

Share of comments raising each issue. Tennessee 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 Tennessee 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 TENNESSEE GOVERNMENTS AND OFFICIALS WITH OPPOSING COMMENTS

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND REGIONAL AGENCIES
City of Knoxville (mayor)

A SAMPLE OF TENNESSEE ORGANIZATIONS WITH OPPOSING COMMENTS

Elmahaba Center

League of Women Voters of Tennessee

IN THEIR WORDS: OPPOSING COMMENTS FROM TENNESSEE

> *"It is not immaterial to the communities we serve, whose health, schooling, housing, and treatment under the law still differ in ways that can be addressed only if they can be measured."*

Elmahaba Center
Nashville-area nonprofit serving Arabic-speaking newcomers · Comment 69146

> *"As a special education professional, I am particularly concerned about how inaccurate population counts could affect students with disabilities."*

Special education teacher and school administrator
writing as an individual · Comment 94177

> *"And schools and school funding--how would schools educate students if there were 10 more students in each classroom than had been projected if everyone isn't counted?"*

Chattanooga resident
writing as an individual · Comment 62472

> *"Knoxville, like communities across the country, relies on an accurate census count to guide infrastructure planning, public safety operations, economic development efforts, and the distribution of federal resources."*

City of Knoxville, mayor
over 200,000 residents; home to University of Tennessee · Comment 146592

> *"Furthermore, demographic data, including race and ethnicity, are important elements in the census that help leaders in the public and private sector fine tune resources to meet the needs of their communities."*

League of Women Voters of Tennessee
letter signed by the League's president · Comment 142655

> *"The census must count the people who actually live in our communities — not redefine them out of existence for political convenience."*

Tennessee resident
writing as an individual · Comment 105757

> *"An inaccurate or incomplete census can deepen existing inequities, particularly for communities that already face disenfranchisement and barriers to healthcare."*

East Tennessee grassroots organizer
writing as an individual · Comment 146422

> *"Census data helps grant applicants demonstrate need, identify underserved populations, such as low income and educational attainment, and establish benchmarks for program evaluation. Changes to these data could affect funding eligibility, competitive applications, and the distribution of federal resources"*

Works at a college serving 10 Southeast Tennessee counties
writing as an individual · Comment 113409

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, 3:27 PM ET.

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