



Effects of Census Accuracy on Apportionment of Congress and Allocations of Federal Funds

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Abstract

How much accuracy is needed in the 2020 census depends on the cost of attaining accuracy and on the consequences of imperfect accuracy. The cost target for the 2020 census of the United States has been specified, and the Census Bureau is developing projections of the accuracy attainable for that cost. It is desirable to have information about the consequences of the accuracy that might be attainable for that cost or for alternative cost levels. To assess the consequences of imperfect census accuracy, Seeskin and Spencer consider alternative profiles of accuracy for states and assess their implications for apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives and for allocation of federal funds. An error in allocation is defined as the difference between the allocation computed under imperfect data and the allocation computed with perfect data. Estimates of expected sums of absolute values of errors are presented for House apportionment and for federal funds allocations.

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