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IRANIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION



LEGAL AND POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THE 2010 U.S. CENSUS

IMPORTANT DATES

Feb. – Mar. 2010	Census questionnaires are mailed or delivered
April 1, 2010	Census Day
Apr. – July 2010	Census Bureau covers missing responses
December 2010	Census Bureau delivers population count
March 2011	Census Bureau completes delivery of data to states

- 1. What is the census?** The purpose of the census is to do an accurate count of the population of everyone in the United States to determine the allocation of public services, like roads, schools, hospitals, and funding. The census occurs every 10 years and is mandated by Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Census Bureau, an agent of the Department of Commerce, administers the census. As explained below, the census is also one of the *most* important tools used by politicians and business leaders when assessing the political and economic demographics and needs of a community.
- 2. How long does it take to complete the census?** According to the Census Bureau, the form will only take ten (10) minutes to complete.
- 3. Where can I obtain the 2010 Census form?** The Census Bureau will mail or deliver questionnaires to your house in February and March 2010. They will mail a second form to households that do not respond to the initial questionnaire. Households that still do not respond will be called or visited by a Census worker. In addition, you can view a sample of the questionnaire at the following link: http://iaba.us/publications/Census%20Questionnaire_Persian-Iranian.pdf.
- 4. What is the deadline for submitting my 2010 Census form?** April 1, 2010. From April through July 2010, census takers will visit homes that did not return the form to the Census Bureau.

5. **Do I have to be a citizen or permanent resident to take the 2010 Census?** No, the census is a count of *everyone* in the United States, regardless of whether they are a citizen, visa-holder, or illegal alien.
6. **Are my answers to the Census form confidential?** Yes, federal law requires that the Census Bureau keep your answers confidential and use them only for population counts that do not reveal any personal data about individuals or households. 13 U.S.C. § 9.
7. **How is my privacy protected?** The Census Bureau has strict confidentiality provisions in place to ensure that the data provided by you is protected. No one, except those persons who are sworn for life to protect your confidentiality and only those who have a need to see the data can see your answers. A person who reveals your information may be fined up to \$5,000 and imprisoned for up to 5 years in jail. 13 U.S.C. § 214. In addition, your answers on the Census are not subject to disclosure under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3); 13 U.S.C. §§ 8(b), 9(a). Further, the Census Bureau has established a Chief Privacy Officer responsible for seeing that the privacy principles are followed.
8. **Can my answers or participation in the 2010 Census subject me to civil or criminal liability or deportation?** No, your answers to the Census form can only be used to take an accurate count of the population. The Census Bureau cannot share your information with anyone, not even government agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) courts, or the police. Your Census information also cannot be shared with private organizations or other individuals. 13 U.S.C. § 9.
9. **What is the benefit of taking the census for the Iranian-American community?** By being counted, you help ensure that the Iranian-American community receives its fair share of political representation and government funding. The 2010 Census data is used in the following ways:
 - a. **Public Services:** Government officials use the census data to allocate funding and grants to high-need areas and non-profit organizations. They also use it to determine where to place schools, roads, hospitals, and other public services.
 - b. **Political Influence:** Numbers translate into power. As noted by the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA), "Iranian Americans have traditionally been undercounted, leading to a diminished sense of representation within American society." Your federal, state and local leaders review the census numbers to determine how numerous and affluent members of the Iranian-American community are. The more Iranian-Americans take the census, the more influential our community becomes.

- c. **Effect on Businesses:** The more visible a community becomes, the more likely it can combat potential employment and other discrimination. Race data is used to promote equal employment opportunities and to remedy racial disparities in health, employment and the environment. Businesses use the census numbers when determining where to locate new housing, shopping centers, or other facilities. Trade organizations and companies also use the census when determining which cultural groups classify as “minorities” or contribute to the their company’s “diversity.”

10. What “race” should I put on the census? It is very important that on Question 9 of the Census that you check the box for "Some other race" and write in "Iranian" or "Iranian-American." Otherwise, Iranian-Americans will not be counted as a distinct cultural group in the U.S. and will not wield the power that comes with numbers. In other words, unless you specifically designate that you are “Iranian” or “Iranian-American” when answering Question 9, you will not be counted as an Iranian-American. For this reason, almost every Iranian-American organization is encouraging Iranian-Americans to designate their race as “Iranian” or “Iranian-American.” Without being counted as “Iranians”, we risk being disenfranchised both politically and economically for at least another 10 years.

11. Do I have to respond to the 2010 Census? Yes, your participation in the 2010 Census is required by law. You can be fined \$100 for not answering the Census and up to \$500 for giving false information. 13 U.S.C. § 221(a)-(b). If you are an owner or agent of a company, business, or organization and refuse to answer questions, you can be fined up to \$10,000. 13 U.S.C. § 224. However, you *cannot* be, under any circumstances, fined for refusing to disclose information about your religion or membership in a religious body. 13 U.S.C. § 221(c).

12. If I am the owner or manager of a hotel, apartment, or lease any premises, do I have to assist census employees? Yes, you must furnish the names and addresses of your tenants and allow census employees access to your tenants. This simply requires that you allow Census officers the right to approach the tenant’s residency, but does not permit you to allow Census officers entry into the tenant’s place of residence. Failure to abide by this law can subject you to a fine of up to \$500. 13 U.S.C. § 223.

13. What is the difference between the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS)? Unlike the Census which takes place every 10 years, the ACS is a survey of only 3 million homes that looks at how communities may be changing. The ACS, like the Census, is confidential and your answers cannot be shared with any government or non-governmental agency.

14. If I receive an ACS form, how should I answer questions on race? Just like the U.S. Census, it is very important that when identifying your race, that you checkmark “Some other race” and write in “Iranian” or “Iranian-American.” In addition, when answering Question 13 on “ancestry or ethnic origin” it is similarly important that you write in “Iranian.”

This document was created as part of the **Iranian American 2010 Census Coalition**. The Coalition includes the following organizations: Bay Area Iranian American Voter Association (BAIVOTER), Iranian American Bar Association (IABA), National Iranian American Council (NIAC), Network of Iranian American Professionals in Orange County (NIPOC), PARSА Community Foundation, Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA), Shabeh Jomeh, and the U.S. Census Bureau. The specific goals of this project are to reach every Iranian American household in the country to educate the about the importance of participating in the 2010 Census, to assure them that the information provided to the Census Bureau will by law be confidential, and to urge them to respond to questions relating to race, ethnicity, and national origin in a consistent manner.

It’s in our Hands – Stand up and Be Counted!

اینده در دستهای ماست – بر پا خیزید تا به حساب آید!



IT’S IN OUR HANDS

Established in 2000 and with almost 1500 members in 11 metropolitan areas, the **Iranian American Bar Association (IABA)** is one of the most prominent minority bar associations in the country. Our goal is to educate and advance the Iranian-American community while developing important professional and public service networks. We are an organization of judges, lawyers, and law students dedicated toward using our knowledge and skills toward the betterment of our community and the community at-large.