

At a Glance

H.R. 151, Equal Representation Act of 2025

As reported by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on April 21, 2026

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2026	2026-2031	2026-2036
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	a	a	not estimated

Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

a. CBO has no basis on which to estimate a change in spending subject to appropriation.

The bill would

- Require the Census Bureau to add a question to the decennial census to identify the citizenship status of each member of a household

Estimated budgetary effects would mainly stem from

- Following up with households that do not respond to the census

Areas of significant uncertainty include

- Estimating the cost of the 2030 census under current law and predicting whether the bureau would include a question on citizenship status even if H.R. 151 is not enacted
- Projecting the extent to which a citizenship question would reduce self-response rates
- Predicting the bureau's response to a decline in self-response rates

Detailed estimate begins on the next page.

See also

[CBO's Cost Estimates Explained](#), [CBO Describes Its Cost-Estimating Process](#), [Glossary](#)

Bill Summary

H.R. 151 would require the Census Bureau to add a question to the 2030 decennial census to identify the citizenship status of each member of a household. The bill also would exclude noncitizens from the population counts used to apportion seats among state delegations within the House of Representatives.

Estimated Federal Cost

The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 370 (commerce and housing credit).

Basis of Estimate

For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 151 will be enacted in fiscal year 2026. CBO has no basis on which to estimate any increase in spending subject to appropriation to implement the bill. Any such costs would depend on whether the Census Bureau plans to include a question on citizenship in the 2030 census absent enactment of H.R. 151. In addition, costs could vary depending on the extent to which including such a question affects response rates and the nature of the Census Bureau's follow-up for households that do not respond to the initial questionnaire.

Background

The Census Bureau is constitutionally required to conduct a census every 10 years. According to the Government Accountability Office, the Census Bureau spent about \$13.7 billion over the 2012-2024 period to conduct the 2020 census.¹ About \$1.4 billion of that amount (or about 10 percent) was spent to follow up with households that did not respond to the initial receipt of the census form.² As of March 2026, the Census Bureau had not finished its estimate of the total cost to conduct the 2030 census.

Spending Subject to Appropriation

CBO cannot predict how the Census Bureau will carry out the 2030 census. The bureau is currently testing a 2030 census questionnaire that includes a citizenship question. If the bureau decides to include a citizenship question in the 2030 census, which it can do under current law, the incremental cost attributable to H.R. 151 would be insignificant.

Additionally, CBO cannot project the extent to which adding a citizenship question would reduce initial response rates or the extent to which the bureau would need to hire additional staff or require existing staff to work over a longer period to reduce nonresponse rates as opposed to using statistical extrapolation. If including a citizenship question does not reduce

1. Government Accountability Office, *2020 Census: A More Complete Lessons Learned Process for Cost and Schedule Would Help the Next Decennial*, GAO-23-105819 (March 2023), www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-105819.

2. Census Bureau, *2020 Census Nonresponse Followup Operational Assessment Report* (November 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/nz9xny47>.

response rates, or if the bureau does not increase efforts to boost participation, the incremental costs attributable to H.R. 151 would be negligible.

Based on recent studies, CBO expects that adding a citizenship question to the 2030 census could slightly decrease the overall self-response rate.³ In response to a decreased initial response rate, the bureau could choose to follow up with nonresponding households, which can in some cases require field staff to visit several times over a period of months.

To estimate the maximum cost of implementing H.R. 151, under the assumption that the Census Bureau will not include a citizenship question in its 2030 questionnaire, CBO used information from the 2020 census to estimate the cost of following up with nonresponding households. In 2020, about 60 million housing units did not self-report and following up with those units cost the Census Bureau about \$1.4 billion—an average of \$23 per nonresponding household. Using the economic projections that underlie CBO’s February 2026 baseline, we estimate that those follow-up costs would increase to \$33 per housing unit in 2030.

CBO estimates that in 2030, the United States will have about 147 million housing units (reflecting about 5 percent growth from 2020), and if the nonresponse rate is the same as in 2020, we project that 63 million units will require follow-up after the initial survey. If the Census Bureau follows up with the nonresponding housing units in the same manner as it did in 2020, CBO estimates that follow-up would cost \$2.1 billion.

CBO expects that asking a question about citizenship could increase the nonresponse rate by between 1 and 2 percentage points, or roughly 1.5 million to 3.0 million households. Thus, the cost of following up with nonresponsive households would increase by between \$50 million and \$100 million, if the Census Bureau follows the same procedures in 2030 that it followed in 2020. If the Census Bureau follows different procedures, perhaps by using more statistical extrapolation, the cost of following up could be less than in 2020.

Pay-As-You-Go Considerations

Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

Increase in Long-Term Net Direct Spending and Deficits

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 151 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037.

3. See J. David Brown and others, “Predicting the Effect of Adding a Citizenship Question to the 2020 Census,” *Demography*, vol. 56, no. 4 (August 2019), pp. 1173-1194, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-019-00803-4>, and Census Bureau, Decennial Statistical Studies Division and American Community Survey Office, *2019 Census Test Report*, version 1.0 (revised), (January 2020), <https://tinyurl.com/5hbhm7v7>.

Mandates

The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

Estimate Prepared By

Federal Costs: David Hughes

Mandates: Rachel Austin

Estimate Reviewed By

Justin Humphrey
Chief, Finance, Housing, and Education Cost Estimates Unit

Kathleen FitzGerald
Chief, Public and Private Mandates Unit

H. Samuel Papenfuss
Deputy Director of Budget Analysis

Estimate Approved By



Phillip L. Swagel
Director, Congressional Budget Office