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Hello,

Below is an op-ed piece written by Brent Kisling, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. As we enter April, we want to remind all Oklahomans of the importance of filling out their Census form and the impact it can have on their local communities, especially considering the current circumstances surrounding COVID-19.

We would appreciate you running this piece in your publication, and would encourage you to remind your readers of the Census in the coming weeks. Additional information can be found at [www.OKLetsCount.org](http://www.OKLetsCount.org), or feel free to contact us for more information.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Dear Editor,

We've entered April 2020. It's not news to say that these are not normal times. This April won't include a Tax Day, an Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, the usual Easter egg hunts or dozens of other community and family activities. Even still, I wanted to pause and take a moment to remind Oklahomans about the importance of completing the 2020 Census.

Our "new normal" and the state of our economy should be an important reminder that even when life seems a little out of control, we must continue to think about the future. And the future of our communities is largely impacted by the results of the 2020 Census.

Oklahoma and the rest of the U.S. have seen emergency declarations over the past couple of weeks. States need funding from the federal government to fight the COVID-19 crisis. I hope the following isn't news to anyone at this point, but I'll say it again: Federal funding for emergencies is determined by data gathered from the Census. Therefore, the funding we receive in the coming weeks and months will be calculated by the data our state provided in the 2010 Census.



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We all know that Oklahoma is different today than it was in 2010 and it's important that we document that. And the *only* way to do it is for all residents of our state to fill out the 2020 Census.

At the end of March, our state's self-response rate is 32.5%. That's below the national average and puts us among the lowest of all states. You know we want to be a Top 10 State. Why not be Top 10 in response rates for the 2020 Census?

You can fill out the Census by phone, by mail or, for the first time ever, online at [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov). Let's take our current situation and be empowered to help our state get the funding it deserves in the future.

Together, we can make sure that every Oklahoman is counted. OK, let's count!

Brent Kisling  
Executive Director  
Oklahoma Department of Commerce