Fact Sheet

PROPOSED BILL

AB 1186 creates more precise race and ethnicity subcategories in state agency demographic data collection, to ensure the state can recognize and efficiently address the unique needs of diverse populations across California. AB 1186 provides a critical foundation to serve communities and their unique needs effectively. More precise data will also improve the accuracy and reliability of California's 2030 population count, ensuring California receives the representation it deserves in Congress. Importantly, this bill also protects the privacy of Californians by only sharing what federal law requires.

To ensure efficient implementation, AB 1186 will establish a Chief Statistician within the Department of Finance's Demographic Research Unit.

BACKGROUND

Currently, state agencies group California's diverse population into a few broad categories—Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and White. While useful, this data does not adequately reflect the diversity of California's communities.

In 2024, federal standards under Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 were updated to require more detailed disaggregated data collection and reporting for federal agencies. This directive presents California with a framework and opportunity to advance the state's data collection processes. The data collected by state agencies is used to inform the Census Count, where accurate data from state agencies can improve the Census's geographic accuracy, efforts to target outreach to disadvantaged groups, and data quality.

PROBLEM

Currently, state agencies group diverse populations into only a few broad race/ethnicity "minimum categories," which complicates efforts to deliver services in a culturally competent way. Categorizing various ethnicities together makes it difficult for policymakers and agencies to meet each community's unique needs; it also makes it difficult to track whether resources are serving all communities.

California's commitment to precise information helped the state achieve a highly accurate 2020 census count, even amid the COVID-19 pandemic. A continued commitment to precise data is crucial to ensure accurate representation in the future.

SOLUTION

AB 1186 enables our state agencies and policymakers to better serve the unique needs of the diverse communities of California. This bill requires state agencies to collect and publish data on at least the nine largest detailed ethnicity subcategories within each major racial or ethnic group, including "Middle Eastern or North African" as a required minimum race/ethnicity category. More precise data enables state agencies to provide services that better meet the needs of California's diverse tapestry of residents, as well as improve the accuracy of California's Census Count. An accurate Census Count is crucial for California to get the representation and funding we residents deserve.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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