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September 1, 2020

Dear Home Owners Association,

I hope that by now many of the residents living in our community have already completed the 2020 Census survey. However, looking at the data toward the end of August, only 61 percent of Floridians have completed their forms. St. Lucie County is slightly ahead of the rest of the state at 63 percent, but that still leaves 37 percent of our households that could go uncounted.

A common misconception is that the Census is simply a count of the general population. Although it is a count of everyone living in the U.S., this information is used to allocate billions of dollars in federal funding and resources to neighborhoods based on population size. Each person not counted could cost St. Lucie County \$1,600 in lost revenue annually for roads, schools, public safety and health care. Also, the number of seats at the House of Representatives given to each state and Electoral College votes are also based on the Census results.

That is why it is vital for local property owners, homeowners and condominium associations to take a proactive role in educating their residents and encouraging them to fill out the 2020 Census. It has never been easier to complete it; it can be done online within a matter of minutes. By getting counted online or over the phone today you will not receive a home visit from Census enumerators, which we know many will find burdensome especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

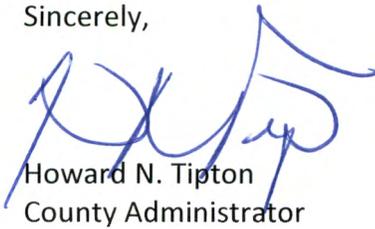
Because of its importance to our community, it is crucial that Census workers have access to gated communities, condominiums and apartments to ensure that all individuals are counted. Census workers have already begun visiting anyone who has not yet filled out the Census – this access must be provided by the gated communities, condominium or apartment building – without the regular security measures such as calls to the unit.

If any of the residents were not reached in-person after several visits, the Census workers will request the information on those residents/households from the building management. It is important that your community be prepared to provide such data in a timely manner and educate their building security and management teams on these rules.

The law clearly states that landlords and managers of rental property will not be in violation of any privacy laws if they provide the requested information about their tenants/residents to Census workers. In fact, if a property manager refuses to provide the Census enumerator with the requested information about the tenants, the HOA can be fined \$500 (possibly per unit), according to [13 U.S.C. §223](#). This statute also requires that if asked by a Census representative, the HOA must answer and provide the names of all occupants in the community; any refusal to provide the names, restrict access, or even limit access of the representative will also result in a \$500 fine. This also means that you cannot set a specific time for Census takers to arrive or leave, they must be allowed to conduct canvassing at their own pace and in their own time.

Attached you'll find some additional information about the Census workers who are going door-to-door in our community. Please share this information with your residents and help us ensure that everyone in St. Lucie County is counted this Census.

Sincerely,



Howard N. Tipton
County Administrator