Much hesitation has occurred in some of our communities about completing the U.S. 2020 Census. Many residents have expressed fear that information they provide will be used against them. The fear, in large part, is felt by recent immigrants or undocumented residents, because of a misconception that government agencies can use census data to find them.

The census is an essential part of our democracy and its sole purpose is to gather statistical data to determine the needs of every community in the United States.

Your information will not be shared with any governmental agency, not ICE, the FBI, or the CIA; it’s the law, and there are no exceptions. Title 13 of the United States Code states that all Census Bureau employees must take an oath to protect your information. It’s a serious federal crime to violate this law — if census takers break the law, they can spend 5 years in prison and/or have to pay a $250,000 fine.

Sadly, this untruth is keeping many from participating in the 2020 Census, meaning you won’t likely get the appropriate funding you and your family need. Your census information influences where roughly 1.5 trillion dollars will be spent! Can you imagine if everyone in your community unified and got counted?

This opportunity to shape the country only comes around every 10 years. This is the time to stand up for what you need within your community.

Trust that your contribution to the U.S. 2020 Census will remain private while also feeling proud that your voice will help guide the funding for programs and services that will positively impact your family’s and your community’s future needs.