



Contact: June M. Shorthair  
Director  
Communications & Public Affairs Office  
P: 520-562-9715  
C: 520-610-6218  
[June.Shorthair@gric.nsn.us](mailto:June.Shorthair@gric.nsn.us)

---

**For Immediate Release**

**September 25, 2020**

## **DECISION IN CENSUS LITIGATION JOINED BY GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY SUPPORTS COMMUNITY'S REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF CENSUS OPERATIONS**

(Sacaton, Arizona) Last evening, the Gila River Indian Community scored a victory in its efforts to make sure a complete and accurate census can be performed. The Community joined a lawsuit that requested census operations continue through October 31, 2020, instead of September 30, 2020 as currently planned by the Census Bureau.

The Community has made extension of census operations a priority because census operations were interrupted on the Reservation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Census Bureau initially planned for census operations to continue until October 31<sup>st</sup>, but reversed that decision in early August for political reasons. Because this condensed timeframe would lead to a rushed census that would make it impossible for a complete and accurate census to be achieved, the Community joined litigation, along with civil rights organizations, local governments, and other stakeholders to force the Census Bureau to go back to its October 31<sup>st</sup> deadline for completion.

Today, the federal district court ruled in the Community's favor, ordering the Census Bureau to continue its counting operations until October 31. Governor Stephen Roe Lewis remarked that "today's court decision is an important victory for us. While the Trump Administration may still appeal the decision, I sincerely hope they don't but instead they put their efforts into making sure there is an accurate count overall. In the meantime, I encourage all Community members to complete your census now because the only sure way to make sure we are counted is to complete our forms by September 30<sup>th</sup>. An accurate count is essential for the Community because it is the basis on which our federal funding will be based for the next 10 years."

This litigation is one of several steps that the Community has taken to ensure a complete and accurate count of Community members. Governor Stephen Roe Lewis also testified in the House of Representatives on September 10<sup>th</sup> requesting an extension of census operations and detailing the impact of an undercount including funding for tribal programs being diverted to state and local governments which would falsely show higher population numbers and, therefore, higher need.

In addition, last Saturday, the Community held a Census and Get Out the Vote Rally and heard from Community elders, youth, state and federal officials on the importance of an accurate census. That program can be viewed on Gila River Broadcasting through Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

---

(More)



Contact: June M. Shorthair  
Director  
Communications & Public Affairs Office  
P: 520-562-9715  
C: 520-610-6218  
[June.Shorthair@gric.nsn.us](mailto:June.Shorthair@gric.nsn.us)

---

###

*Gila River Indian Community located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona and home to the indigenous O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) people. The Tribe is comprised of seven districts, the administrative offices and departments are located in Sacaton, and serve the people throughout these seven community districts. 100% of its profits from gaming and 17 other Enterprises are utilized by the community providing services and opportunities to achieve the highest quality of life.*

---

(More)