

Goodin urges residents to cooperate with Census officials

Written by Marty Randall

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State Rep. Terry Goodin said the door-to-door phase of the 2010 U.S. Census count is underway in Indiana and that Hoosiers should offer their cooperation with census officials. "The Census data is the determining factor for funding for numerous projects and institutions that affect our daily lives," said Goodin. "Funding for economic development projects, job training centers, schools, hospitals, fire stations, public libraries, senior centers, and emergency services as well as bridges, tunnels and other public works projects are dependent upon the number of citizens who live in a given area. Those figures are determined by the Census." "In addition, corporations use the data to determine where to build factories, grocery stores, pharmacies, and various other businesses," continued Goodin. "Our communities' strength is in their numbers. Take a few minutes and make sure you are counted. It is important for our cities, our counties, our state, and, most importantly, our families." Goodin said the mail-in phase of the Census was successful with 78 percent of Hoosiers returning their census forms, which is an improvement on the state's 76 percent rate in the 2000 Census. This year Indiana and Iowa were tied for the third highest return rate in the country.

Goodin said that while many townships in the state have had a good return rate, others have had less than 70 percent participation. The door-to-door phase of the census count, which continues through July 10, will concentrate heavily in those areas.

"If a census taker visits your home, be sure to ask to see his or her identification badge," suggested Goodin. "All census workers must carry official government badges with their names clearly printed. Census takers will never request to enter your home and will ask only the questions that appear on the 2010 Census questionnaire. If you are not home when the census taker visits, he or she will leave a contact number, so you can schedule a convenient time to complete the form.

"Be assured that your privacy will be protected, because the census taker who collects your information has sworn a lifetime oath of nondisclosure," added Goodin. "The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or imprisonment of up to five years. Also, by law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including the IRS.