

President plans trip to Houston

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wading into a high-stakes political battle over how the 2000 Census will be conducted, President Clinton travels to Houston on Tuesday to make the case for a new method of counting the nation's population.

At first blush, the once-a-decade head count might not seem a front-burner political issue.

But the census is of keen importance because states receive their share of \$180 billion or so annually in federal money for everything from Medicaid to highways on the basis of official population estimates.

And, more importantly for political strategists, the census determines the number of House seats per state — and ultimately either could help swing control of the House back to Democrats or further cement the GOP's hold.

By the Census Bureau's own estimate, the 1990 Census missed 4 million people and proved notoriously bad at counting minorities and the inner-city poor. Five percent of all Hispanics and blacks were missed last time, compared to less than one percent of non-Hispanic whites.

In Texas, nearly half a million people were missed. That undercount is depriving the state of hundreds of millions of federal dollars, state officials estimate.

The selection of Houston for the presidential showcase was not accidental. Nearly 67,000 people in the city were missed in the 1990 count.

Clinton, who will take part in a roundtable discussion at a community center, will talk about "why it's so important to have an accurate census," White House communications director Ann Lewis said.

While in Texas, Clinton also will raise money for the Democratic National Committee and congressional campaigns at fund raisers in Houston and Dallas.

The administration is pushing a census using what Lewis calls "the most up-to-date scientific methods."

The Census Bureau wants to count 90 percent of households the traditional way — with mail-in questionnaires and in-person visits — and then use statistical sampling techniques

to estimate those who were missed. Without sampling, Census officials suggest the count could be even less accurate than it was in 1990.

But their plan has run into a buzz saw on Capitol Hill, where Republicans are leery of anything other than the actual enumeration called for in the Constitution. Sampling is of dubious scientific merit, they say, citing a botched sampling test attempted and jettisoned during 1990 Census calculations.

GOP lawmakers fear that a sampling adjustment — or a deliberate manipulation of the numbers — could result in higher counts in inner-city areas and other traditionally Democratic strongholds, possibly costing them seats. House Republicans have filed suit in federal court to block any use of sampling.

"The partisan calculations of political science are driving the Clinton administration's census sampling scheme," said Rep. Dan Miller, the Florida Republican who chairs the House census subcommittee.

"Rather than committing himself to do the hard work necessary to end the minority undercount, the president is out peddling statistical snake oil to the public that will add millions of 'virtual people' in some areas while subtracting millions of real people from other areas," Miller added.

Administration officials defend sampling as a sound science and deny any political intent in advocating the Census Bureau's proposal.

"This is not the administration plan. This is the plan of the National Academy of Sciences and the statistical experts of the Census Bureau," said Commerce Undersecretary Robert Shapiro, whose department is the Census Bureau's parent.

Manipulation of the numbers would be possible only with "widespread corruption and conspiracy across the country of professional Census Bureau officials," Shapiro said. "You can't do that."

But, says Miller spokeswoman Liz Hickley: "Even if there wasn't political manipulation, it's just such a risky scheme that we don't trust that the government is going to be able to pull this off."

Getting his feet wet

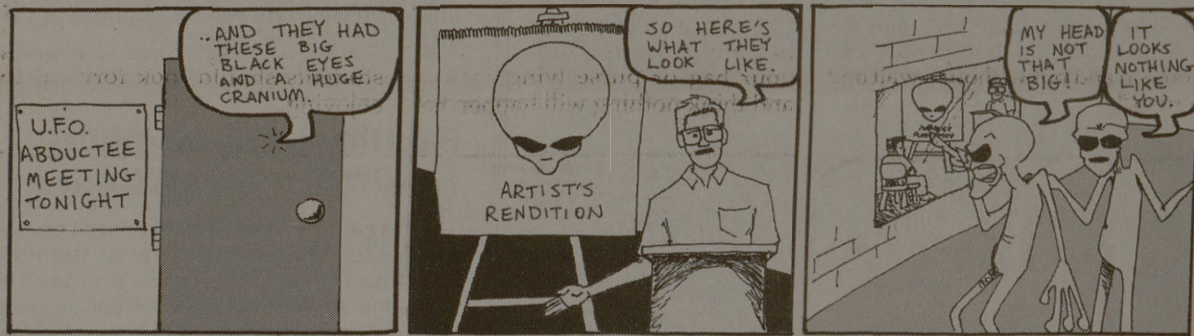


Willie Jackson, a landscape maintenance worker, stays cool Monday afternoon in the summer heat while working on a broken water sprinkler in front of the Koldus building.

MIKE FUENTES/The Battalion

The Greys

By Gabby



Andy

By Stephen



CAMPUS CALENDAR

Monday, June 8 Spring '99 Program. Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program at 10 a.m. in 154 and 161 Bizzell Hall West.	Wednesday, June 17 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 5:30 p.m. in 154, 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.	meeting at 10 a.m. in 154, Bizzell Hall West to promote Italy Spring '99 Program.
Tuesday, June 9 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 3 p.m. in 154 and 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.	Thursday, June 18 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 1 p.m. in 154, 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.	Friday, June 26 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 11 a.m. in 154, 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.
Thursday, June 11 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 5:30 p.m. in 154, 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.	Monday, June 22 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 5:30 p.m. in 154, 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.	Campus Calendar is a service of <i>The Battalion</i> that lists non-profit student and faculty events and activities. Items should be submitted no later than three working print days in advance of the desired run date. Application deadlines and notices are not events and will not be run in Campus Calendar. If you have any questions please call the newsroom at 845-3313.
Monday, June 15 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 9 a.m. in 154, 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.	Wednesday, June 24 Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 10 a.m. in 154, 161 Bizzell Hall West to promote the Italy Spring '99 Program.	

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