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BAD NEWS FOR EVERYONE! THE 2020 CENSUS IS ALREADY IN TROUBLE



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GIVEN THE SUDDEN canning of FBI head James Comey on Tuesday, don't feel bad if you didn't hear that US Census Bureau director John H. Thompson announced his resignation the same day. And given that the Comey situation may plunge American politics into a 21st century Watergate, you probably don't care, either.

Well, you should. Thompson's departure, now slated for June, could further hamper a bureau already starved for funding and scrambling to prepare for the 2020 Census. "The Census is on a relentless calendar, and there's much, much work to do over the next three years," says Kenneth Prewitt, who ran the Census Bureau from 1998 to 2001 and now teaches at Columbia University. "With no one in charge, things slow down."

That's a problem, because the decennial Census does more than count heads to allocate congressional seats. It provides a vital source of quality, public data on where and how people live. It's a vital benchmark for government (How many people need a frequent bus route in this neighborhood? Does that town need a new road?) and the