

Wilmington Create Complete Count Committee

Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki created the city's committee to prepare for the 2020 Census on Monday, after City Council twice failed to do the same.

Purzycki signed an executive order establishing the city's 2020 "Complete Count Committee," a body that the U.S. Census Bureau urges state and local governments to put together to encourage everybody to participate in the every-10-year count of all American residents.

The creation of the committee was on the City Council agenda Jan. 10, but some council members refused to support any legislation amid a dispute over the appointment of a new council member to a vacant seat.

The Census is used to determine both political representation and district lines based on population change, and the distribution of billions of dollars in federal funds to states for services.

"Throughout history, the importance of counting all residents in the national census has been proven over and over again," Purzycki said in a news release. "It is irresponsible to hold up an important matter like obtaining an accurate Wilmington Census count just to make a political point."

His order creating the committee is virtually the same as the legislation City Council failed to reach a majority vote to approve.

It establishes a committee co-chaired by Purzycki and Council President Hanifa Shabazz, who will appoint representatives from city government, religious organizations, schools, businesses, nonprofits and the state's Complete Count Committee.

It does not include a measure that Councilwoman Michelle Harlee added to the council legislation before it was not approved, which would have put all members of city council on the committee.

Harlee added that measure following the first time Council failed to create the committee.

Initially, some council members took issue with the fact that the legislation did not specify the size of the committee.