

Helping to focus outreach & advocacy (& funding) resources for the 2020 Census

*Defining, counting, and mapping the
“hard to count” population*

July 2017

Background

In 2010, the Census Bureau had basically done the work for us of defining the “hard to count” population and its characteristics:

- The Bureau provided a tract-level Planning Database with Hard to Count (HTC) scores and the underlying population characteristics on which the score was based.

Our job was just to decide what "HTC" score constituted a "hard to count" tract:

- low scores meant the tract was more likely to have a high percent of households mailing back their census forms, and high scores meant a lower likelihood of mailing back the forms;
- we decided on 20% of tracts with highest HTC scores. We produced the tables and maps based on this threshold. (Screenshots from 2010 on next slide.)



[HTC Maps](#) [More...](#) [Twitter](#)

- State
- County
- Metro
- Tract

"Hard to Count" (HTC) population

Percent of overall population living in "hard to count" (HTC) tracts in 2000

HTC Tracts: they have a hard-to-count "score" of more than 60 (see Census Bureau methodology [PDF]).

30% transparent

Hard to count measures (tracts labeled with HTC score)

- Yellow Hard to count (HTC score = 61 - 70)
- Orange Harder to count (HTC score = 71 - 75)
- Red Hardest to count (HTC score 76+ top 10% in U.S.)
- Areas with no HTC tracts not shaded

Total population in HTC tracts

Number of people living in "hard to count" (HTC) tracts in 2000
• 1,000 or fewer

Renter occupied units

Language "isolation"

Unemployment

Poverty

Public assistance recipients

No high school diploma

Recent movers (1999-2000)

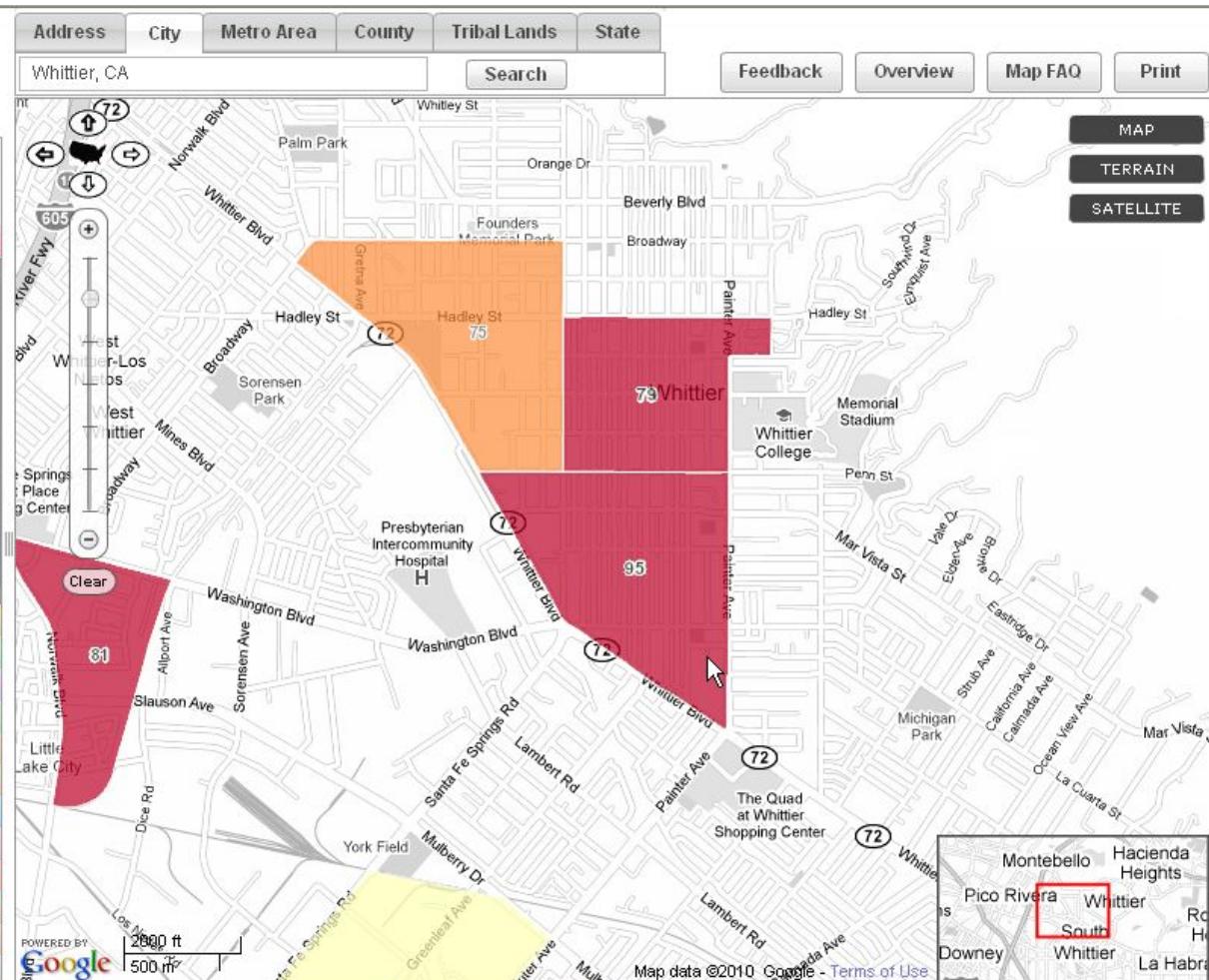
Multi-family housing

Vacant housing units

Crowded housing

Non husband-wife households

No telephone in home



Map application developed by the CUNY Mapping Service at the Center for Urban Research • Project funded by the Hagedorn Foundation • Created with the [Funders Census Initiative](#)



HTC Maps More... Twitter

State County
 Metro Tract

"Hard to Count" (HTC) population

Renter occupied units

Language "isolation"

Percent of hard-to-count households that are "linguistically isolated"
 10% transparent

Households in HTC tracts in which a language other than English is spoken at home and no person over age 14 speaks English "Very Well" or "Only", as a percent of the tract's households

2% or less
2% - 5%
5% - 10%
10% - 20%
20% or more
No HTC population linguistically isolated

Total hard-to-count households that are "linguistically isolated"

Unemployment

Poverty

Public assistance recipients

No high school diploma

Recent movers (1999-2000)

Multi-family housing

Vacant housing units

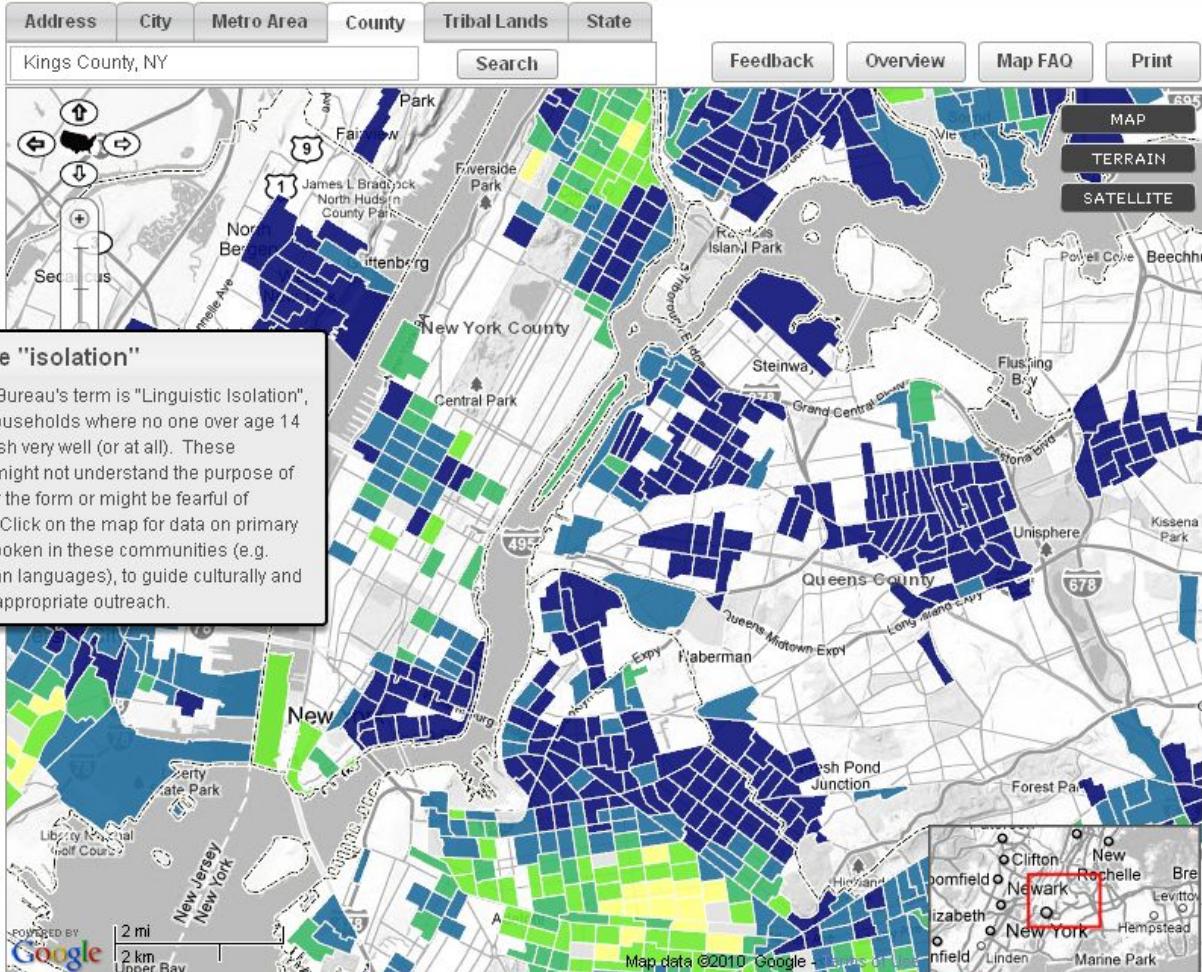
Crowded housing

Non husband-wife households

No telephone in home

Language "isolation"

The Census Bureau's term is "Linguistic Isolation", referring to households where no one over age 14 speaks English very well (or at all). These households might not understand the purpose of the census or the form or might be fearful of government. Click on the map for data on primary languages spoken in these communities (e.g. Spanish, Asian languages), to guide culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach.



Map application developed by the CUNY Mapping Service at the Center for Urban Research • Project funded by the Hagedorn Foundation • Created with the Funders Census Initiative

For the 2020 census, things have changed:

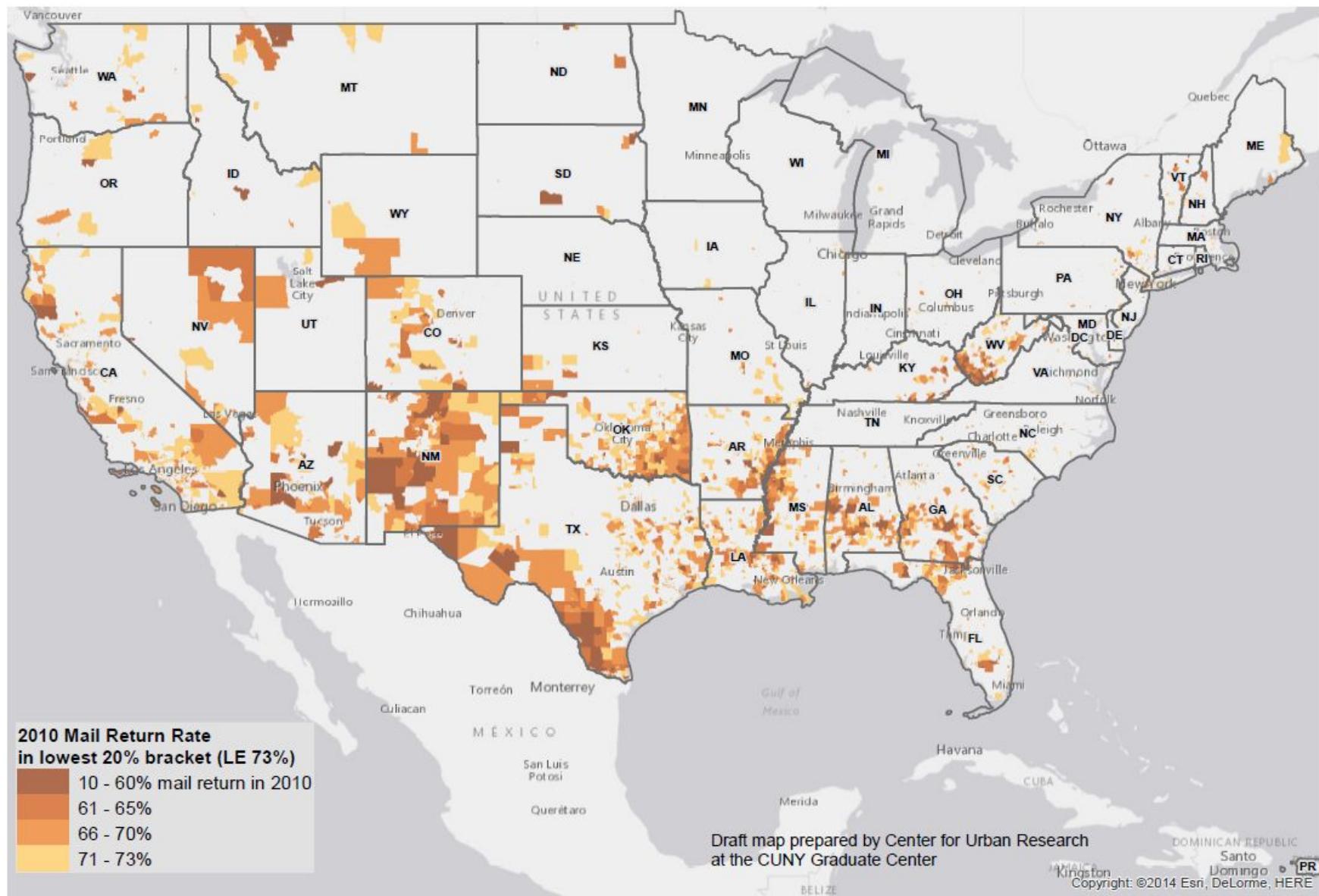
- The Census Bureau's "Low Response Score" (LRS) statistical model has replaced the HTC scores.
- Mail response will be just one of three ways that households can submit their answers to the census questionnaire.
 - Indeed, the Census Bureau is planning on most households using the Internet to submit their answers.
- Political dynamics have introduced uncertainty in how certain groups will respond to the census, in particular recent immigrants, undocumented immigrants, and others who may have a high level of distrust of government questionnaires.

2020 definition of “Hard to Count”

Census advocates are using the 2010 mail return rate as proxy for hard-to-count tracts:

- Tracts with **2010 mail return rate of 73% or less (worst 20% of tracts nationwide)**;
- This provides an actual measure of households that self-responded to the census;
- In tracts with low mail returns, Census Bureau had to conduct costly “non-response follow up” (basically door-to-door enumeration), increasing the risk that many households would be missed in the census.

MAP 2:
2010 Mail Return Rates by Tract
for all tracts with return rate of 73% or less



The plan

Tables and Fact Sheets

- With Bill O'Hare, produce tables of the population living in hard-to-count tracts
- Tables will inform The Leadership Conference's fact sheets (see <http://civilrights.org/census/>)
- Tables will provide population counts and percentages, and rankings by count and percent, for:
 - States, congressional districts, and largest cities
 - For the following groups:
 - Children under 5
 - Major race/ethnicity groups (and likely also subgroups)
 - Recent immigrants
 - People in transitory housing situations, group quarters, and without fixed housing situations
 - Low income households
 - MENA population (people of Middle Eastern / North African ancestry)
 - Households with inadequate Internet access

The plan

Interactive Map

- Reprise the 2010 hard to count interactive map
- For 2020, make it available in phases:
 - **Phase 1 (now)** focus on advocacy efforts – the map will have a prominent feature of enabling people to search for/zoom to Congressional and/or state legislative districts, and see a map of HTC tracts and related information, and also be able to download data for that district.
 - **Phase 2 (later this year / 2018)** expand the map to include the other populations described in the LCCHR tables, to help funders and outreach groups identify areas to focus on as they plan “Get Out The Count” campaigns
 - **Phase 3 (2018 through Census Day 2020):** provide support to “Get Out The Count” campaigns; expand mapped data layers as needed (tracts receiving bilingual mailings, tracts receiving follow up mailings, local data from organizations doing outreach, etc)
 - **Phase 4 (immediately following Census Day 2020):** analyze census participation as households submit their information online or mail back census questionnaires, to help outreach groups with last-minute campaigns

HTC 2020

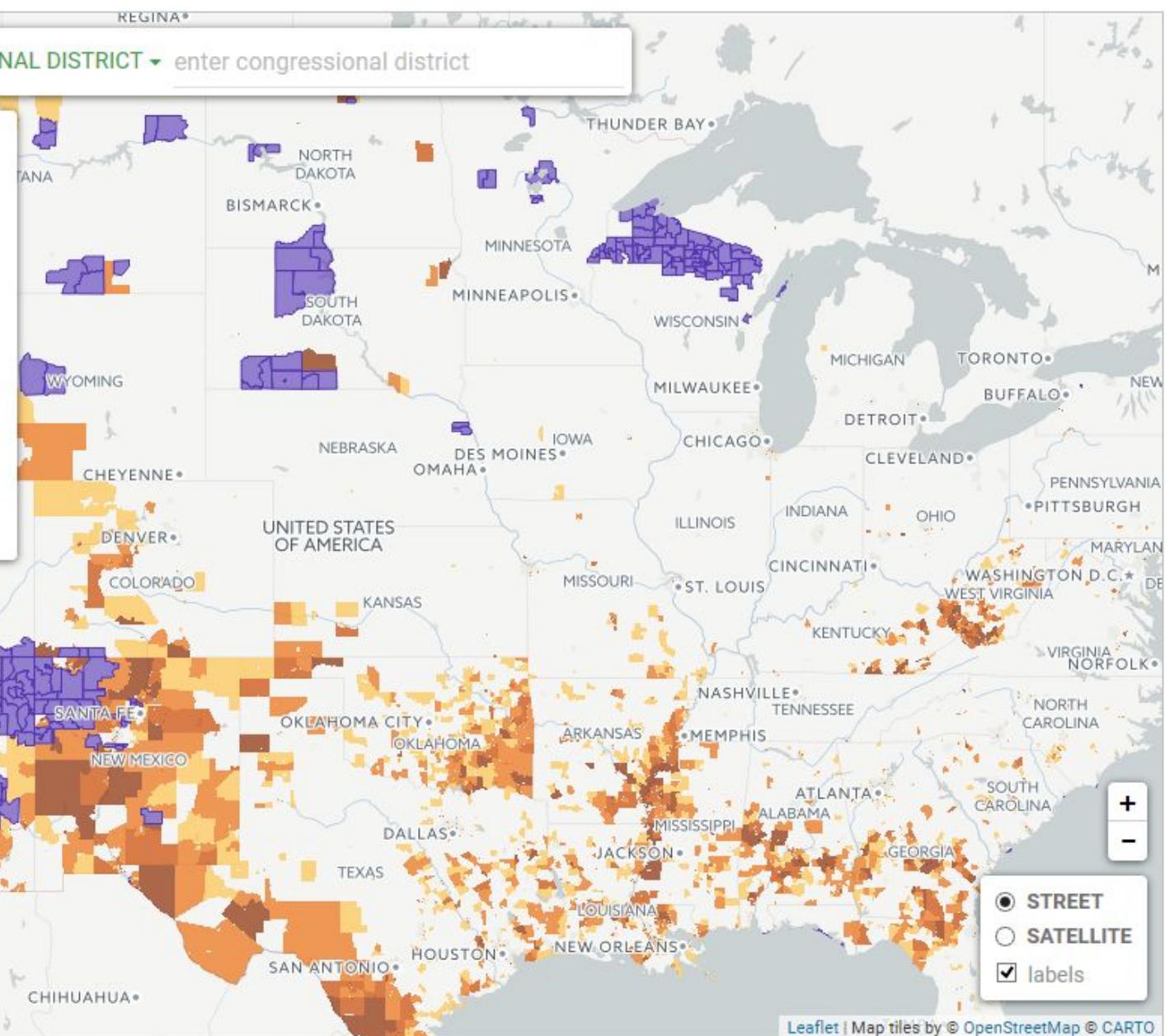
SEARCH BY: US CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ▾ enter congressional district

Hardest To Count Tracts In The Nation

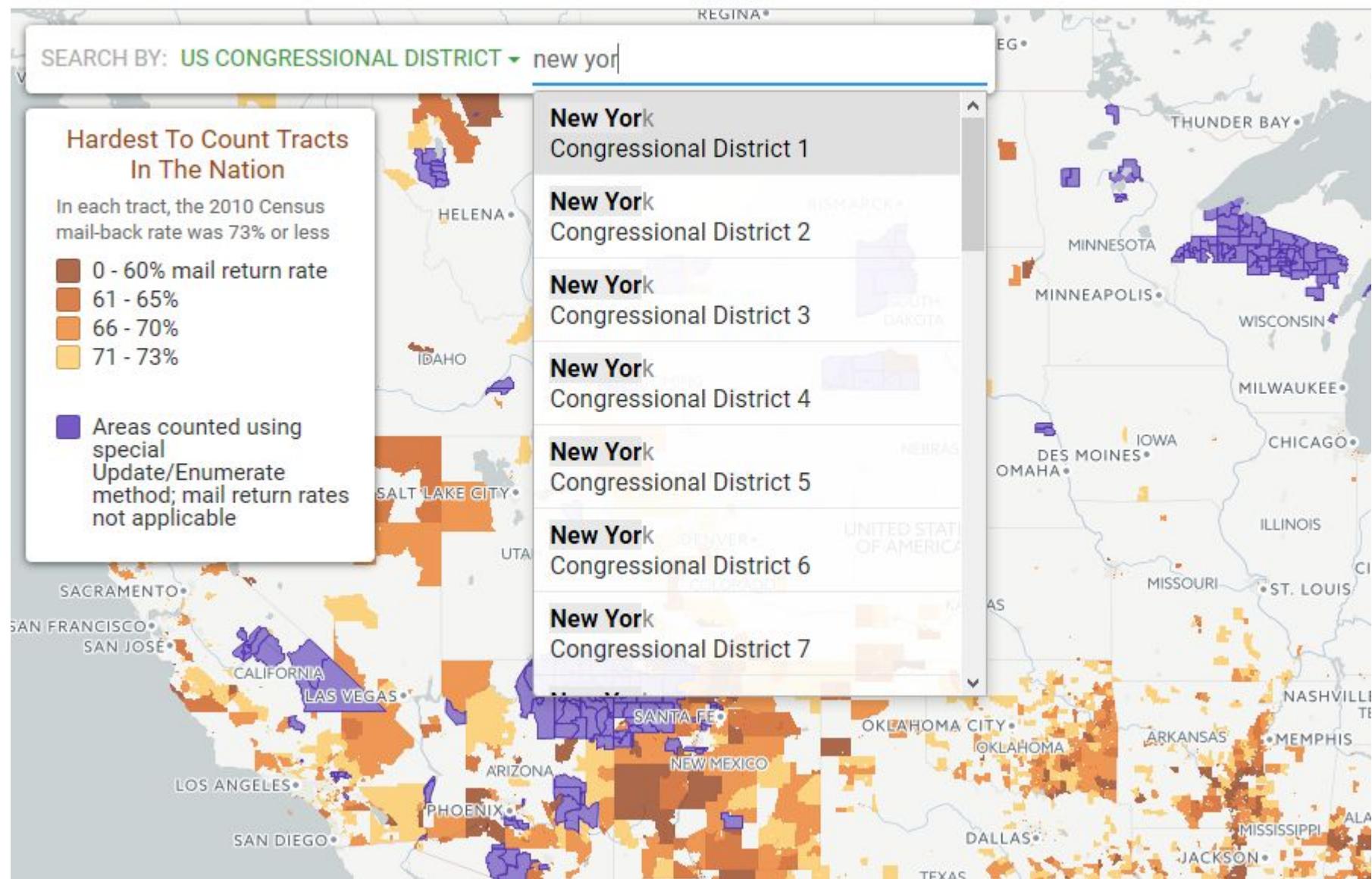
In each tract, the 2010 Census
mail-back rate was 73% or less



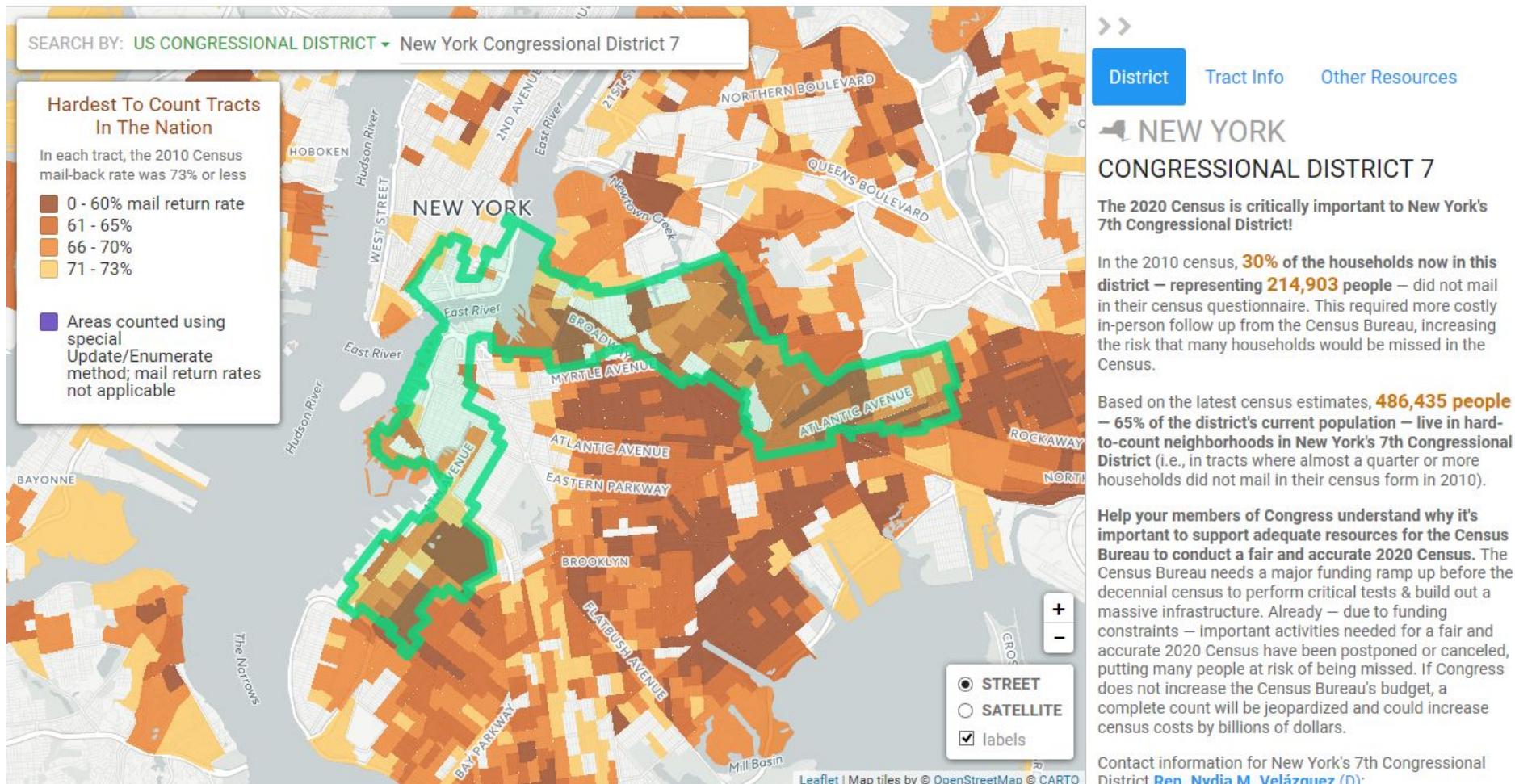
Areas counted using
special
Update/Enumerate
method; mail return rates
not applicable



HTC 2020



HTC 2020



HTC 2020

SEARCH BY: US CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ▾ New York Congressional District 7

Hardest To Count Tracts In The Nation

In each tract, the 2010 Census mail-back rate was 73% or less

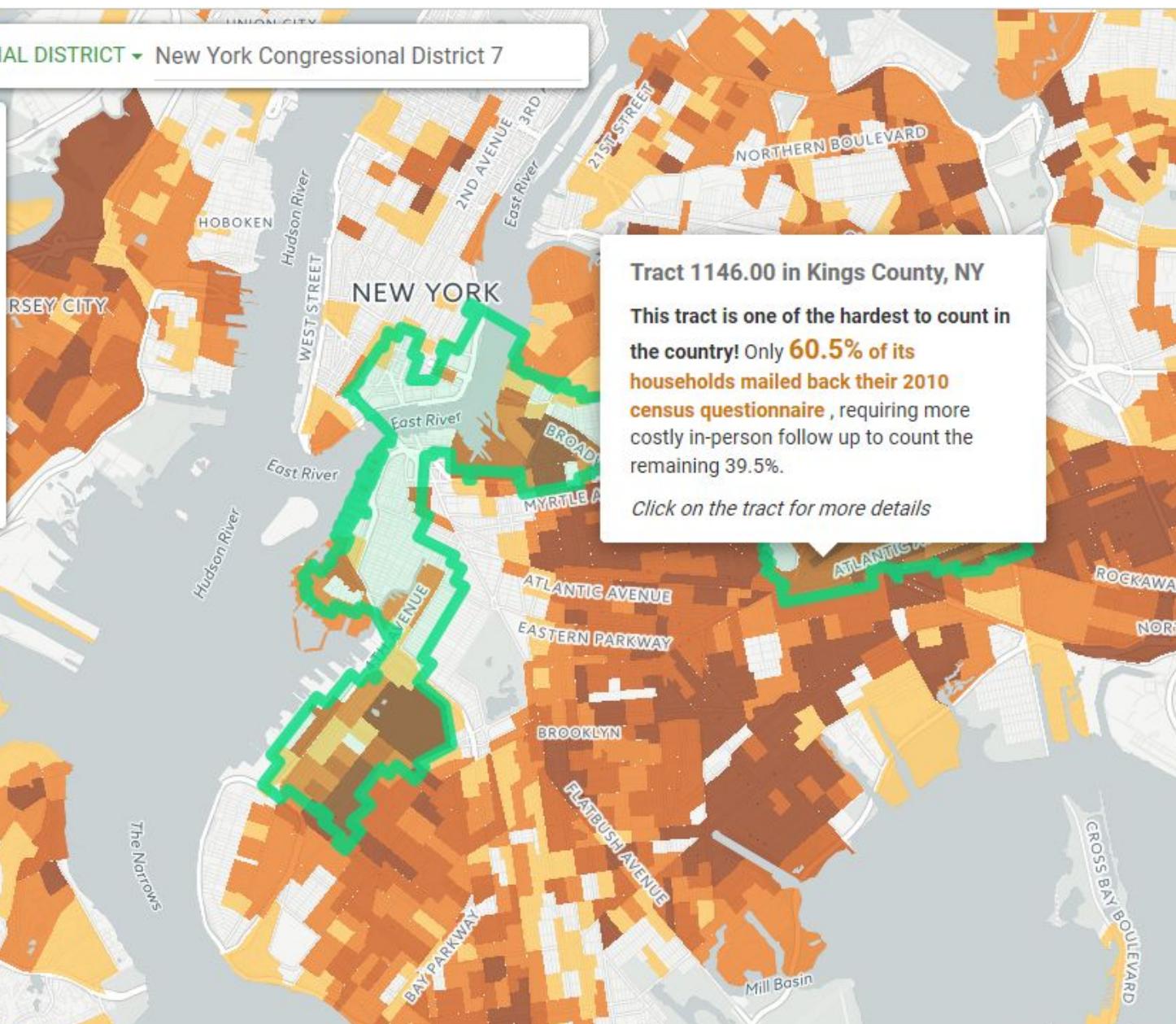


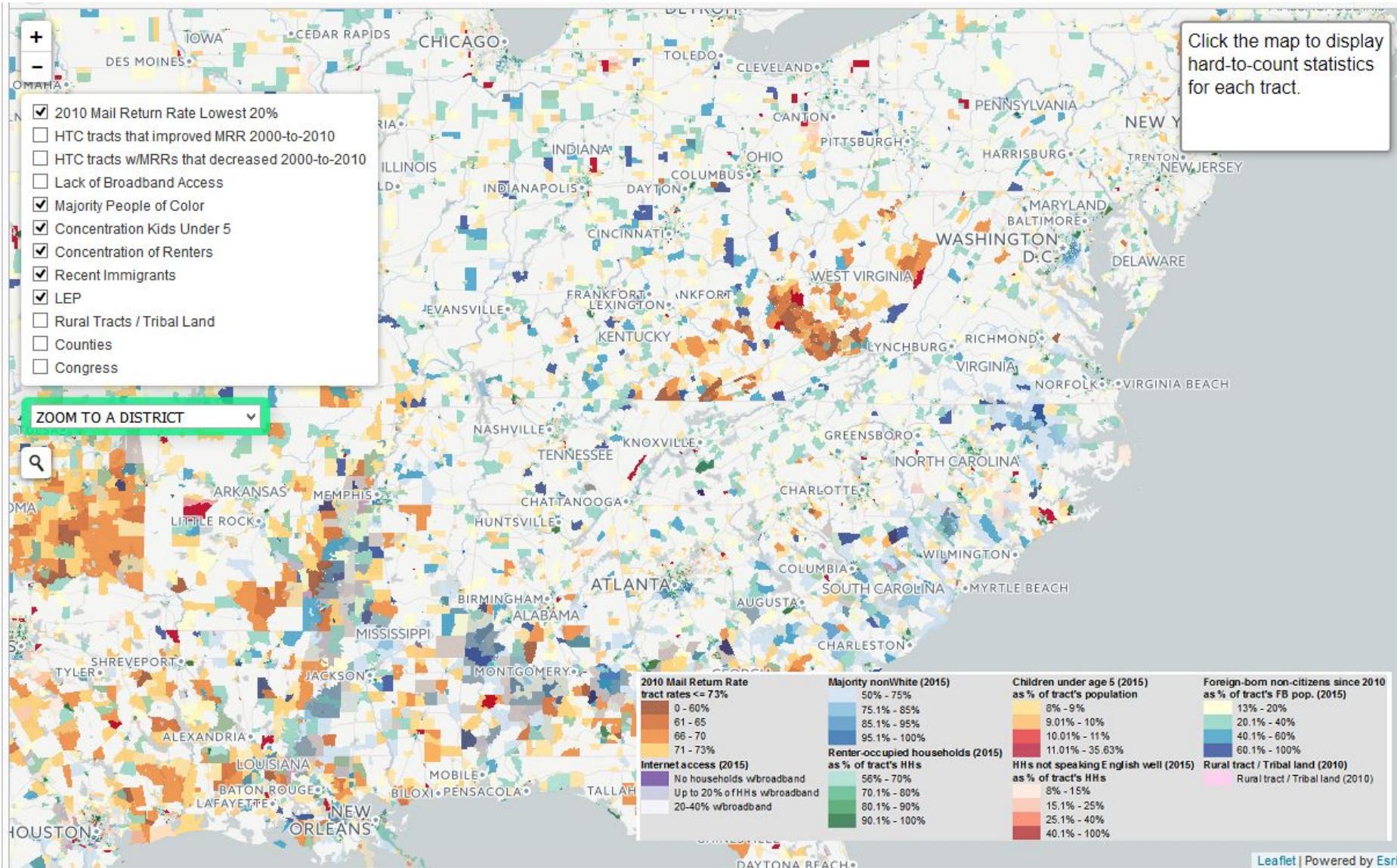
■ Areas counted using special Update/Enumerate method; mail return rates not applicable

Tract 1146.00 in Kings County, NY

This tract is one of the hardest to count in the country! Only **60.5%** of its households mailed back their 2010 census questionnaire, requiring more costly in-person follow up to count the remaining 39.5%.

Click on the tract for more details





The plan

Interactive Map

- The map will include the following features:

- **Search / zoom in to other types of areas** (such as city, county, region, Tribal Land, ZIP Code)
- Location-specific (perhaps just state-level) **data from Andrew Reamer's analysis** of funding that could be impacted by an inaccurate count
- **Links to LCCHR and/or Census Project** and/or others with Census 2020 fact sheets, etc
- **Links to Census Bureau resources**
- **Print feature**, so people can use the map for meetings, reports, etc
- **Perma links**, so people can share the map on social media, etc
- **Data download options** that either will be district/area-specific, or will simply point to the statewide tables at LCCHR's website.

Other considerations

Coordination with the Census Bureau:

- The Bureau will be focusing its outreach priorities around communities with high “low response scores” (i.e., tracts identified in the LRS statistical model).
 - Publicly they will not be using any of the other data described in the previous slides, unless it is included in the 2010 decennial census data and/or tract-level, 5-yr ACS estimates.
- We determined that, for now, the Low Response Score predicted values are not adequate for outreach/advocacy efforts
- Nonetheless, we plan to continue to coordinate with the Census Bureau – our efforts are all focused on the same goal: a fair and accurate count