

Low Southern Census Returns Prompt Increased Media Push

N.C. legislators will use the census to draft new election districts, which will impact the state's political future.

By JESSICA CHISM
Staff Writer

Low response rates in the South for the 2000 Census prompted officials to use paid advertising for the first time in the history of the census.

Proponents of the census stressed its importance, saying it would have long-lasting effects on the state's politics, economy and schools.

The new radio and TV ads launched Wednesday emphasize the need for residents to fill out census forms, as these let the government know how much money to allocate for initiatives such as child care and firefighting equipment.

Jennifer Marks, advertising director for the Census Bureau, said the response rate had dropped consistently nationwide in the past three censuses, and a mail survey that was sent out in 1995 received an extremely low response.

So far, the census bureau has only received a 51 percent response from N.C. residents since the census was released earlier this year — one of the lowest response rates in the South.

"It is because of this trend that we decided to turn to paid advertising," Marks said.

Marks said that in the past the census bureau had relied solely on public service announcements to publicize the census. "The problem with public service announcements is that you have no control over when the message runs," she said.

"With the paid advertisements, we know when they are running and what type of audience is hearing the message."

The Census Bureau is running ads in 12 states, focusing mainly on the South, Marks said.

She added that states in the South traditionally had lower response rates, and this year was no exception.

As of Tuesday, the response rates in North Carolina, Texas, Georgia and Florida were all under the national average of 55 percent.

UNC political science Professor Thad Beyle said there were several theories on why the response rates were lower in the South.

"There are always different explana-

tions," Beyle said. "The amount of rural areas in Southern states, the high concentration of minorities and the misunderstanding of the purpose of a census are all factors."

Marks and Beyle both emphasized the importance of the 2000 census.

Beyle said the redistricting of North Carolina's legislative districts, which is dependent on the results of the census, could have a significant impact on the politics of the state.

"The problem with public service announcements is that you have no control over when the message runs."

JENNIFER MARKS
Census Bureau Advertising Director

Marks said the majority of Americans did not realize that the census dictated how federal funds were allocated.

"These new radio ads emphasize the effects of the census on federal funding," she said. "For example, the amount of money given to the state for education is affected by the responses of the census."

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IN THE NEWS

Judge Lifts Gag Orders In Fla. Smokers Case

MIAMI — A decision lifting a gag order that kept parties from talking about a landmark tobacco trial for 18 months didn't get lawyers in the case talking Thursday during the second day of deliberations.

"I don't know the effect of it, frankly," Circuit Judge Robert Kaye said of the federal ruling late Wednesday reversing his trial gag order.

Kaye received the ruling Thursday morning and hadn't read the full 20-page opinion before jurors came into court to resume their deliberations on a \$13.2 million damage claim by three smokers with cancer.

Kaye said he planned no additional comment on the reversal.

News media lawyers and Philip Morris, one of the defendants, welcomed the decision by U.S. District Judge Adalberto Jordan, who rejected the gag as unconstitutional but said Kaye could impose a less-restrictive one.

But attorneys in the case declined comment, a routine practice during deliberations, whether a gag order is in place or not.

Frank Amodeo, Mary Farnan and the late Angie Della Vecchia want the jury to say smoking was the legal cause of their cancers and force the nation's five biggest cigarette makers to pay their actual and intangible losses.

Elian's Father Sets Foot On U.S. Soil to See Son

WASHINGTON — On U.S. soil, Juan Miguel Gonzalez said Thursday he was "truly impatient" to reclaim his son Elian, but his hopes for an orderly transfer of custody were dimmed when government negotiations with the 6-year-old Cuban boy's Miami relatives broke down.

The father declared his love for son Elian and chastised those who are trying "to obtain political advantage" from the custody battle over the shipwreck survivor.

He received immediate assurances that the U.S. government is eager to reunite him with his son. "It is simply the right thing to do," said Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder. "The father and his son need to be together."

But Jose Garcia-Pedrosa, the attorney for the relatives with whom Elian has been staying since November, said the negotiations with the government were over, primarily because the government refused to promise that they wouldn't "take Elian away in the middle of the night."

He also said immigration officials refused to agree to a psychological evaluation determining whether Elian

should be handed over to his father.

"He has not had his day in court," Garcia-Pedrosa said. "This is a very, very sad day."

A Justice Department official stopped short of saying the talks were over.

"We are disappointed that the attorneys for the Miami relatives insisted on relitigating the issue of whether Elian should be returned to his father as opposed to how to carry that transfer out in the most appropriate manner," said one official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Get Out! Seinfeld Preps For Fatherhood Foray

NEW YORK — Imagine Jerry Seinfeld inside his Long Island mansion, baby bottle in one hand, burp cloth in the other, musing: Whyyyyyy do they call it a burp cloth?

That's right. First came love (1998), then came marriage (last December) — and now Seinfeld and bride, Jessica Sklar, will soon be pushing a baby carriage.

The big announcement was made Thursday by Seinfeld pal Regis Philbin on TV's "Live With Regis and Kathie Lee."

"Yes. It's true. There will be a new little Seinfeld sometime this fall," said Seinfeld's spokeswoman, Elizabeth Clarke.

It is the first child for both Sklar and Seinfeld, who made millions from a TV show that glorified single life and poked fun at commitment.

That was then and this is now, and soon the 45-year-old Seinfeld will be up to his diaper bag in commitment.

Associated Press

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VIGIL

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nation, child abuse is underreported by 66 percent, and this number does not even include child neglect."

Keynote speaker Marcia Herman-Giddens, a child maltreatment consultant at UNC, talked about the ways in which the children were killed.

"These kids did not die easily — many were smothered or received brutal physical punishment," she said.

Composer Pamela St. John recited a poem titled "Inner Children" written by Paula Johnson and performed an original sonata, titled "Connections."

"The piece is mostly autobiographical," she said. "Parts of the sections are painful, and show that this type of trauma causes parts of yourself to be shut out from each other."

After the ceremony, everyone in attendance took a lighted candle and marched over to the courthouse, singing "This Little Light of Mine."

Giddens said the issue had not received enough attention at the University.

"Very little attention is given to this issue at UNC, especially at the medical school," she said. "It is also very telling that the federal government still isn't providing any leadership in finding the number of child abuse fatalities."

Giddens said that while child abuse was often difficult to talk about, people needed to address it more.

"Child abuse is unpleasant — no one wants to think about it or take a look at it," she said. "But keeping it invisible will never bring it to the forefront."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

OPC Area Program, a non-profit agency providing outstanding Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse services, has the following position available:

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TECH
Chapel Hill
Job #23-TE-01

This is a temporary position requiring 4-8 hours of work per week. As a member of the clinical treatment team, individual will participate in the development of client-specific goals and strategies designed to assist clients in activities of daily living. Will work with client in the community to promote social, recreational, and independent living skills as defined in treatment plan.

A high school diploma with 2 years of experience in providing support services to adults with mental illness; or BA in Psychology or related field is required. Must have excellent oral/written communication skills, as well as the ability to establish effective working relationships with community, consumers, and other professionals. Some knowledge of mental illness and behavioral interventions preferred.

Please forward resume indicating position of interest to: Human Resources, OPC Area Program, 101 E. Weaver St., Suite 300, Carrboro, NC 27510. Must have a valid NC driver's license and driving record acceptable to OPC insurance carrier. EOE.

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