



## Census figures show considerable drop in Staten Island's rate of population growth

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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- The official count is in: There are 468,730 of us.

Figures released today from the 2010 U.S. Census show Staten Island's population increased 5.6 percent since the last decennial tally.

While the jump is noteworthy and the largest in the city, the rate of growth has slowed considerably from the blistering pace of expansion the borough experienced between 1990 and 2000, when the population increased by 17 percent.



Advance file photo

The latest Census count showed 468,730 people living on Staten Island.

And the tally -- based on the monumental, once-a-decade effort to count every single person in the country -- is also puzzling demographers, Census watchers and politicians, because it is also significantly lower than the agency's own annual estimates, which last year put Staten Island's population at 491,730.

"It's somewhat shocking. When you have two different methods and they're giving you two different results and they're radically different, one of them is wrong, and it's possible they're both wrong," said Jonathan Peters, a demographer at the College of Staten Island. "There's a lot of drift here. We'll keep an eye on it; the story is not over. Something has to be recalibrated."

The data unveiled today represents the first set of New York information released from the 2010 count, and provides just bare bone facts about who we are: Population size, race, ethnicity and voting age.

More detailed and nuanced information historically associated with the decennial Census such as income, housing, country of origin and other demographic data, is now produced every year, based on statistical samplings in the American Community Survey.

But the decennial Census remains the holy grail of population counts. Political districts are drawn based on these numbers, and allocations of federal money also hinge on this data.

In an effort to ensure the city receive its fair share from Washington-- which the mayor recently said is roughly \$3,000 per person annually -- New York City has historically challenged the Census results, and won.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg again today questioned the accuracy of the count, which put the city's overall population at 8.175 million.

"The census says that we have added 166,000-odd people since the 2000 count, but we are concerned that there's been a significant undercount," said Bloomberg, adding he was especially skeptical about the slow, to no growth in Queens and Brooklyn.

Bloomberg and others cited the challenges Census workers have in finding hard-to-reach groups, such as new immigrants or families quietly doubling up in homes and public housing in an effort to save money.

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