

Black Officials Work For Full Census

by John McCarron

In Chicago a coalition of black officials on Monday called for a special Black Census Day, May 24 to remedy what they described as an alarming lag in census returns from the inner city.

About 15 members of the Black Elected Officials press conference to begin an informational campaign that will culminate with a census rally May 24 in Daley Center Plaza.

"A lot of our people don't understand there are money and political power at stake here,"

said State Rep. William Hendy (D. Chicago). "Unless we are counted, we won't get our fair share of either."

Preliminary census returns show that some areas of the city such as Henry's West Side district, have returned less than 60 per cent of the census questionnaires mailed to all homes in late March. Meanwhile, predominately white areas of the city are already more than 80 per cent counted, and many suburbs have passed the 95 per cent mark.

Coalition members predicted that if all blacks are counted, as many as

five more city wards will show black majorities.

Before the census began, local officials predicted that Chicago and the close-in suburbs could lose up to two seats in Congress unless a complete count is achieved.

Roland Burris, state comptroller, said that black political and community organizations would field their own guides to help census workers find all the families in their districts. Last week these census workers, called enumerators, began calling on homes that did not return questionnaires

by mail.

Bianne Banis, a spokesman for the three-state Chicago census region, said the Census Bureau welcomed the initiative by the black politicians. However, she said, the guides would not be allowed to take part in census interviews because that would violate the bureau's doctrine of confidentiality.

Miss Banis said that as of Friday, 72 per cent of all families had been counted. However, the count ranged widely from a high of 95 per cent on the Southwest Side to a low of only 53 per cent on the West Side.

Police Officers Sue

Black police officers in Oakland have filed a \$1 million class action suit against the city of Oakland, its top officials, the chief of police, an organization representing white officers and others.

The suit alleges racial and sexual discrimination.

It was filed yesterday in Alameda County Superior Court by the Oakland Black Officers' Association and eight of its individual members.

Named as defendants in addition to the city were the Oakland city council, city manager, and chief of police, three deputy police chiefs, the city's personnel director, the Oakland Police Officers' Association, and several current and former officers of the association.

The suit, filed on behalf of some 200 Oakland police department members, alleges that minority and female police officers were denied equal employment opportunities.

It also contends that minority officers were placed under the supervision of higher ranking officers 'with known racial prejudices' and that the plaintiffs were subjected to numerous ordeals, including harassment and racial slurs.

The defendants are accused of acting with 'reckless disregard' of the plaintiffs' rights.

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