

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **ACLU Calls on Elected Officials to Collect, Release COVID-19 Demographic Data**

SAN DIEGO — Today, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and 13 ACLU affiliates, including the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties (ACLU-SDIC), sent [letters](#) to state officials and state departments of health across the country urging those offices to collect and release aggregate race, ethnicity and other demographic data of COVID-19 infections and deaths, to the extent consistent with privacy laws. The letters also call for the equitable distribution of personal protective and medical equipment.

On April 9, ACLU-SDIC sent letters to the [San Diego County Public Health Department](#) and [Imperial County Public Health Department](#). San Diego is sharing limited demographic data. As of today, Imperial County is not disaggregating demographic data by race and ethnicity on COVID-19 infections and deaths on its [website](#).

As other jurisdictions begin to release demographic data of COVID-19 infections, it is becoming increasingly urgent to identify communities that are in particular need of support. As of Friday, 34 states and the District of Columbia have shared [racial breakdowns](#) of COVID-19 infections, and 26 states and the District of Columbia have shared breakdowns of COVID-19 deaths. The data has shown that by and large, Black people are dying at [disproportionate rates](#).

In today's letter, the ACLU is calling on all state officials to standardize, collect and release aggregate demographic data of COVID-19 infections and deaths for government entities to effectively address this pandemic, direct resources where they are most needed and better protect all communities. The ACLU of California sent a similar [letter](#) to Gov. Gavin Newsom on April 9.

The comments below are from the following:

**ReNika Moore, Director of the Racial Justice Program at the ACLU:** “Racial disparities in health care, policing and incarceration, and who holds ‘essential’ jobs, are among the factors that make people of color among the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have to address this pandemic through a racial justice lens, including by collecting and reporting accurate data on rates of infection and outcomes by race. We must take action to protect those most vulnerable.”

**Christie Hill, Deputy Advocacy Director at the ACLU-SDIC:** “We cannot manage a pandemic if we don’t know who is being affected by it. Our review of the Imperial County’s website shows the local government is not releasing COVID-19 infections and deaths by race and ethnicity. We urge the Imperial County Public Health Department to collect comprehensive demographic data and to share what they learn.

“We applaud the San Diego County Public Health Department for releasing some demographic information, such as the race of people who have died or tested positive for COVID-19. But this gives us only part of the picture.

“The people need more information, including demographic data on who has been tested and who has been hospitalized. Issues of equity are often cast aside during public emergencies. San Diego and Imperial counties can lead the way by collecting and, to the greatest extent possible, by sharing comprehensive data that can help us to fight this pandemic.”

Letter to state and local officials is here:

[https://www.aclunc.org/sites/default/files/COVID-19 Letter to Governor Newsom re Equity Data Collection 4-9-2020.pdf](https://www.aclunc.org/sites/default/files/COVID-19%20Letter%20to%20Governor%20Newsom%20re%20Equity%20Data%20Collection%204-9-2020.pdf)

The links to San Diego and Imperial counties letters are here:

<https://www.aclusandiego.org/letter-to-dr-wooten-regarding-advancing-equity-issues-pertaining-to-the-pandemic-response/>; <https://www.aclusandiego.org/letter-to-imperial-county-health-officer-regarding-advancing-equity-issues-pertaining-to-the-pandemic-response/>

This release can be found online here:

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