

Oro Valley Council – History Lesson

"Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." - Winston Churchill

So let's start with a brief history lesson.

Since 1790, federal law has mandated participation in the decennial census, making the refusal to answer a criminal offense subject to statutory penalties.

In 1929, Congress enacted the Census Act, which established strict confidentiality protections, prohibiting the disclosure of individually identifiable records under threat of severe fines and imprisonment.

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a proclamation regarding the Sixteenth Decennial Census. He did so in an attempt to quell public fears regarding the intrusiveness of the census by guaranteeing the government's collection of information was benign, temporary, and legally protected. I want to read you the core of that promise:

'The sole purpose of the Census is to secure general statistical information... No person can be harmed in any way by furnishing the information required. The Census has nothing to do with... the enforcement of any national, state, or local law, or ordinance. There need be no fear that any disclosure will be made regarding any individual person or his affairs. For the due protection of the rights and interests of the persons furnishing information, every employee of the Census Bureau is prohibited, under heavy penalty, from disclosing any information which may thus come to his knowledge.'

That was the official, ironclad guarantee. But let's look at what actually happened.

- **In 1942**, that law was nullified by the **Second War Powers Act**, which allowed the government to bypass privacy protections and use census data to identify, locate, and facilitate the forced internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans. The ruin that followed was absolute. For over four years, families were held in camps, their homes seized, their businesses liquidated, and their status as equal citizens stripped away.
- **In 1954** Congress, recognizing this grave injustice, passed Title 13 of the U.S. Code to ensure that the data collected for the common good could never again be used to cause individual detriment.
- And in **2004**, less than three years after 9/11, it was revealed that the Census Bureau had provided the Department of Homeland Security with mapping data of Arab American populations by ZIP code, sorted by country of origin.

This is the cycle we are trapped in: we build a system of data collection, we promise it is for the 'common good,' and the moment a new 'emergency' arises, those promises are shredded in the name of 'public safety.'

This is exactly why we must be skeptical of the 'public safety' promises made by proponents of the Flock system. They tell you the data is secure. But history has shown otherwise.

Protect our personal data by ensuring it is never collected in the first place. Cancel the flock contract.