Experts: Census could hurt La.
Illegal alien count raises concern

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Louisiana and 42 states could lose congressional representation, Electoral College votes and trillions of federal dollars to seven other states if people living in the country illegally are counted in the 2010 U.S. Census.

That's the message John Baker, an LSU professor of constitutional law, and Elliott Stonecipher, a Louisiana Democrat, want U.S. citizens to know.

The two, who published an op/ed piece Aug. 9 in The Wall Street Journal, were in Lafayette on Monday evening discussing the consequences of what they call an unconstitutional U.S. Census and urging residents to get involved.

About 40 people attended the event sponsored by the Alexander Law Firm of Baton Rouge and Teche Federal Bank.

Stonecipher learned earlier this year that the Census Bureau will include in the 2010 count 22 million noncitizens and treat them the same as U.S. citizens.

The Center for Immigration Studies estimates that 60 percent of them are not documented migrants, he said.

"Whoever the 22 million are, they're going to be included in calculations of congressional reapportionment," Stonecipher said.

Thirty-one seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, Electoral College votes and $4 trillion over 10 years in federal money will go to people who are not U.S. citizens, he said.

Only seven states stand to gain if noncitizens are counted: Florida, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, California, New Jersey and New York. Texas stands to gain four congressional seats with the 2010 Census, Stonecipher said.

Forty-three states, including Louisiana, will come out on the losing end.

Louisiana, after the 2010 Census, could lose at least $115 million in federal funds a year and a congressional seat, he said.

The best plan is to count everyone in the Census, but include a citizenship question so that noncitizens can be removed when establishing congressional districts and Electoral College votes, Stonecipher said.

Baker said he favors increased immigration, particularly for professionals like doctors and teachers, but counting noncitizens undermines the U.S. Constitution.

There are three things residents can do to help change the situation:

• Urge Louisiana Attorney General James "Buddy" Caldwell to sue the Census Bureau on behalf of the state of Louisiana to include a citizenship question in the 2010 Census. Call his office at 225-326-6079 or visit http://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx?articleID=28&catID=12.
• Urge your congressman to tell the Census Bureau to include the citizenship question.
• Help raise money to pay for legal action by the state to sue the Census Bureau.

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