



Census Data in Minnesota Statutes
Prepared for the SDC / CIC Spring Brownbag

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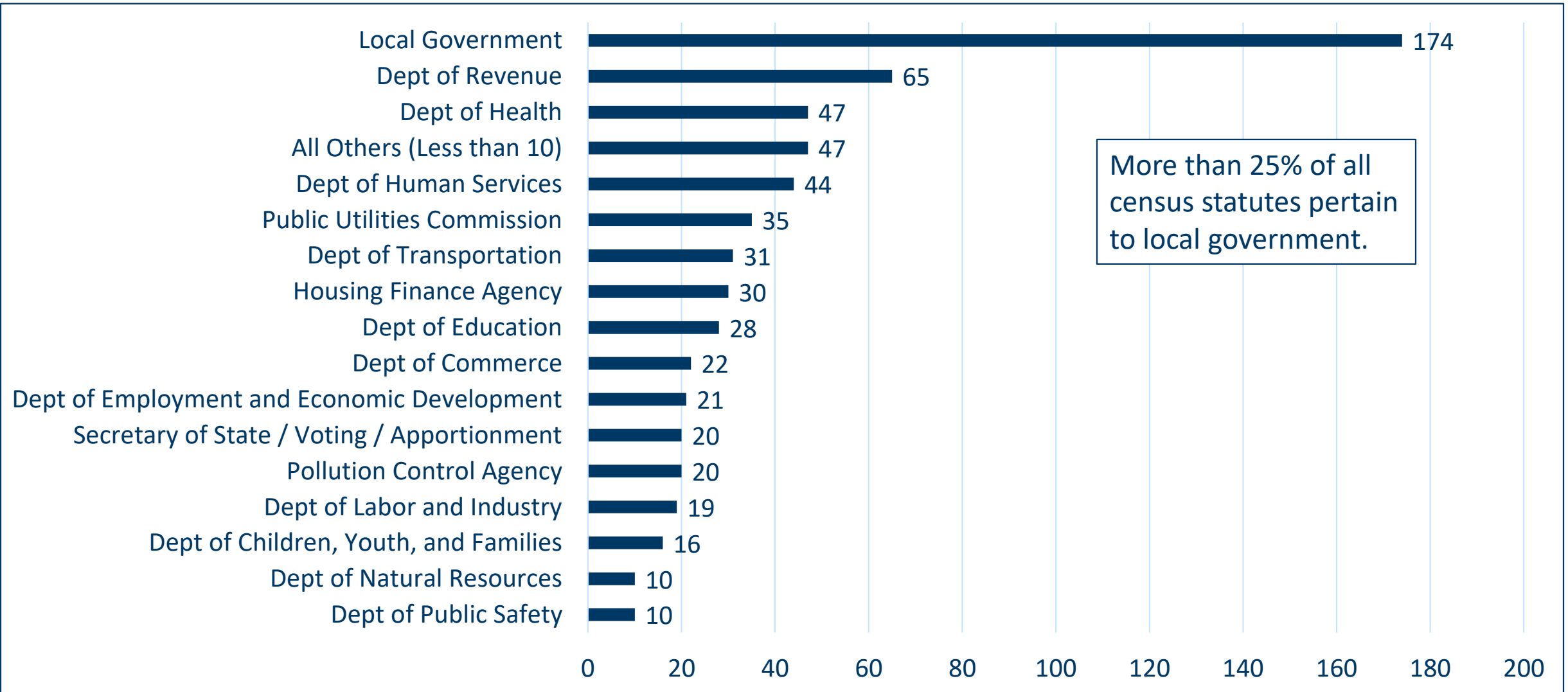
Census Data in Minnesota Statutes: About the Data

- Interest and subsequent research as a response to January 2025 federal data blackout
 - How is Census Bureau data used in Minnesota government (state and local)?
- Dual purpose: learning more about and advocating for Census Bureau data
- Initial statutory review by 40+ members of Minnesota Senate Counsel, Research and Fiscal Analysis (SCRFA) and Minnesota House Research Department (HRD), follow-up analysis by the Minnesota State Demographic Center
- At least 630 references to U.S. Census Bureau population data in Minnesota statutes
 - Decennial, pop estimates (Census Bureau and our SDC), and American Community Survey
 - Some references vague, some explicit
- Census population data and geography is frequently the objective, unambiguous backbone of Minnesota politics, laws, and social programs
- Caveat: data should be interpreted broadly; some determinations made without legal expertise

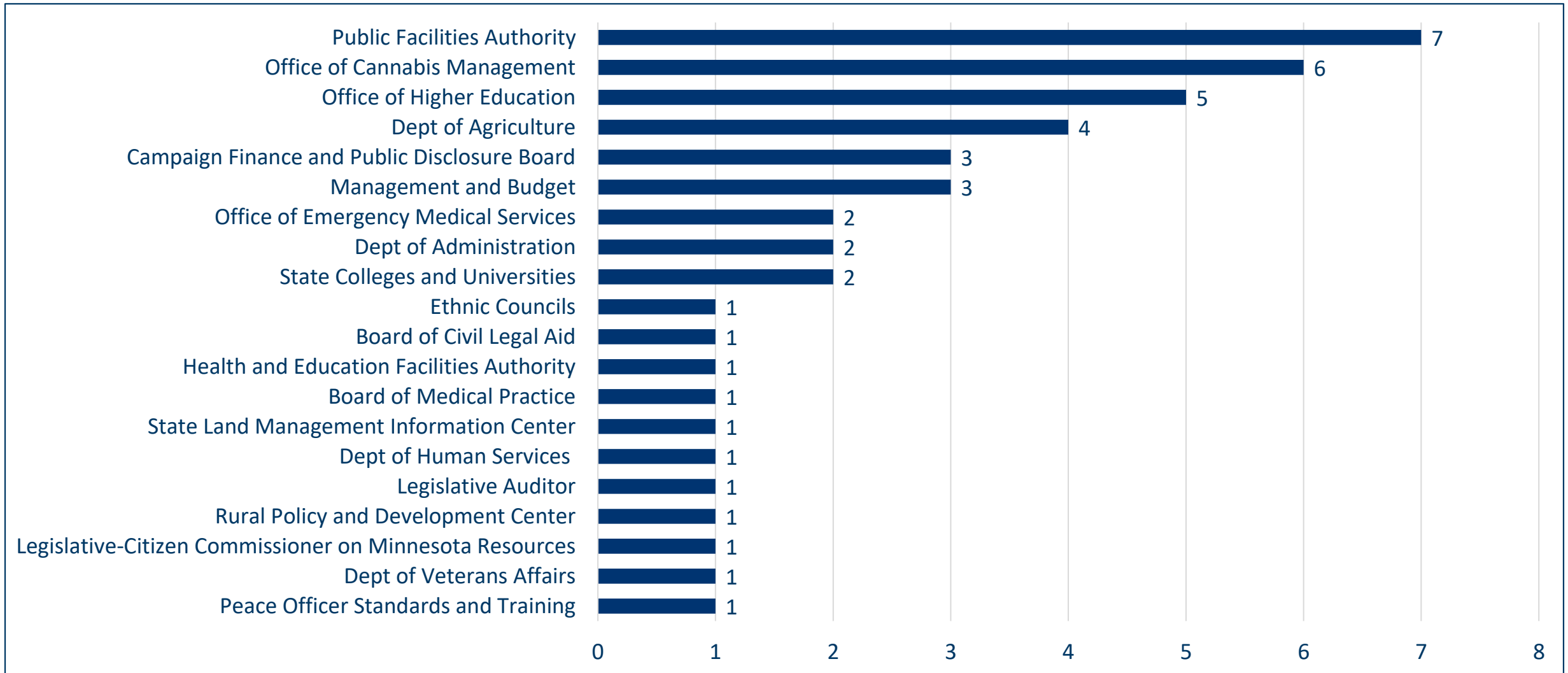
Big Baskets: Boundaries, Governments, Individuals

- Legislative, congressional, ward, precinct district boundaries (modified from census count after reallocation of prison pop i.e., no “prison gerrymandering”)
 - Other boundaries include language minority districts (translation services)
- Local government: Population thresholds determine funding, responsibilities
 - Transportation, waste and recycling, health, liquor, fire departments, and more
 - City “class system” outlines more uniform legal frameworks for urban areas
 - Duties and obligations of local officials, from court fees to municipal boundaries (roadways), etc.
- Individuals: Program eligibility
 - Income thresholds, poverty-based qualifications for SNAP, housing assistance, health programs (often, this is data from the American Community Survey)

Census Data in Minnesota Statutes, by Relevant State Agency



Census Data in Minnesota Statutes, by Relevant State Agency “All Others (Less than 10)”



- Venison distribution and reimbursement (Dept of Agriculture)
 - Ensuring the equitable statewide distribution of donated and processed deer meat according to the allocation formula used in USDA / federal emergency food assistance program (ACS)
- Limitations on establishing or relocating car dealerships (Dept of Commerce)
 - In determining... good cause... [for] relocating an additional franchise for the same line make, the court shall take into consideration the existing circumstances, including, but not limited to... the growth or decline in population and new car registrations in the relevant market area
- Cemetery requirements and regulations (Local government)
 - Establishing a permanent care / improvement fund for cemetery land in cities of 50,000+

- Have other states attempted something similar?
- Condense findings into a digestible document
 - How best to convey the exhaustive, varied uses of Census Bureau data?
- Convey the breadth of census relevance without giving the impression of over-regulation
 - In other words, to show importance – but not “tyranny” – of the data