

March 10, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As representatives of professionals from a variety of fields, and as a group that is concerned about the accuracy and completeness of the census count, we write to express our concern about the delay in nominating an experienced director of the Census Bureau.

We fully understand the Administration's focus on the current challenges of the Department of Commerce. We would like to emphasize, however, that the appointment of a Census Bureau Director as soon as possible is imperative because of the need for strong and decisive leadership in the decisions now being made in preparation for the 2010 Census. Further, we highly recommend a director with strong management and scientific skills, an understanding of the bureau's programs and surveys, and experience interacting with the Administration, Congress and the various Census stakeholders.

The Washington Post recently cited the Census Bureau's expert staff as having a "well-earned reputation for integrity and political independence." *The Wall Street Journal* called the Bureau one of the "most rigorously nonpartisan operations in government." We urge you to continue the tradition of respecting the Census Bureau's political independence, in both reality and perception, to guard against diminished public confidence in the census process and outcome.

If we can be of any assistance to your administration as you consider individuals for this position, please let us know.

Respectfully yours,



Lynne Crossman
President
Southern Demographic Association



Kathleen Harris
President
Population Association of America



Howard Fienberg
Director of Government Affairs
The Marketing Research Association



Richard A. Kulka
President
American Association for Public Opinion
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Felice J. Levine
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