

September 20, 2010

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, Chairman Mollohan, and Ranking Member Wolf,

We write to you as a broad coalition of public sector associations, civil rights groups, housing and child advocates, professional societies, and research organizations to urge full funding of the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY2011) request for the U.S. Census Bureau. We understand the FY2011 request level is above the amount approved by the subcommittee, but we respectfully encourage your reconsideration because of the importance of all Census Bureau data to smarter, more effective government through guidance of nearly \$520 billion in federal spending annually. The request level is specifically necessary to ensure a successful conclusion of the 2010 decennial census, improved accuracy of the American Community Survey (ACS), implementation of an alternative poverty measure, early planning for the 2020 Census, and effective continuation of other important surveys and statistical programs.

For the remaining phases of the 2010 Census, the agency must process and tabulate census data; publish state population totals for congressional apportionment, detailed population counts for redistricting under P.L. 94-171, and summary data products; conduct post-census evaluations; and close Local Census Offices and Regional Census Centers.

The \$44 million requested increase for the ACS supports an expansion of the ACS sample from its current 2.9 million to 3.5 million housing units. With a growing population and housing stock, a larger sample is needed to preserve the scientific integrity of the survey and improve the collection of reliable data for smaller population groups (such as ethnic and language minorities). This funding also would allow for improved telephone and field data collection; 100 percent follow-up of unresponsive households in remote areas; and a comprehensive review of three-year and five-year ACS estimates. These activities are imperative for ensuring the ACS can continue to provide valid data about the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the American people on an ongoing, annual basis.

We fully support ACS in its current framework along with the sample expansion proposed in the FY2011 request. As the attached document that our organizations have compiled shows, Congress relies on ACS data to guide the distribution of \$485 billion annually in federal grants to states and localities. Preserving the accuracy of these data is a modest investment to ensure that these funds are meeting the needs Congress intended to address. Indeed, Congress has consistently expressed bipartisan support for replacing the traditional census "long form" with more frequent and, therefore, more timely data collection through the ACS. In the 109th Congress, House appropriators said in their report

accompanying the Census Bureau's funding measure that the committee "is steadfast in its support of the Census Bureau and the Administration's efforts to collect long-form data on an on-going basis rather than waiting for once-a-decade decennial long-form data."

Even as the 2010 Census winds down, early research and development for the next count will help control costs and streamline operations in 2020. The Administration proposes launching a \$26 million initiative in FY2011 to update the Master Address File and TIGER digital mapping system continuously throughout the decade. We believe the proposal represents a sound investment that will help contain the overall cost of the next decennial while improving the accuracy of the address lists and maps on which the entire enumeration relies.

The budget proposal also anticipates preparation for the 2012 quinquennial Economic Census and Census of Governments. During these turbulent economic times, in particular, data from the Economic Census will help policymakers track the health of U.S. manufacturing, trade services, finance, construction, transportation, and most other industries and economic sectors.

We know that Congress faces tight fiscal constraints and that there are many worthy programs funded through the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill. In fact, the Census Bureau's work provides data essential to ensure, both directly and indirectly, the prudent distribution of funds through many of the programs in this and other appropriations measures. And, of course, census data are used for reapportionment and redistricting at all levels of government, as well as determining the composition of the Electoral College. In short, funding for the Census Bureau is a wise and necessary investment in the effective governance of our nation and preservation of our democratic ideals.

For all of these reasons, we urge the Appropriations Committee to support the Administration's FY2011 request (\$1.267 billion) and to reject any amendments that would reduce the resources available to the Census Bureau to meet its Congressional and constitutional mandates.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and for your support of the Census Bureau.

American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)
American Planning Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Arab American Institute and Foundation
Asian American Justice Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED)
Council for Community and Economic Research
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Demos
Latino Census Network
Mid-Region Council of Governments
Moving Forward Gulf Coast, Inc.
National Association of Counties (NACo)

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Congress of American Indians
National Education Association
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Multi Housing Council
National Urban League
Population Association of America
Population Resource Center
Prison Policy Initiative
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Southern Demographic Association
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Unity Diaspora Coalition