

March 16, 2009

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
U.S. House of Representatives
2332 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515-3214

Dear Congresswoman Maloney:

We are writing to express our support for the key provisions of H.R. 1254, 'The Restoring the Integrity of American Statistics Act' and to thank you for your leadership on issues important to preserving and enhancing the mission of the U.S. Census Bureau.

As you know, the Census Bureau is the largest statistical agency in the federal system overseeing a vast and diverse set of surveys used by federal, state, and local government officials, social service organizations, businesses, and researchers. The Bureau's products are invaluable to understanding changes in our economy and society but often go unappreciated as part of our nation's data 'infrastructure.' The methods used to collect and analyze the data for Census surveys and decennial censuses rely on very advanced scientific methods. Therefore, like other scientific agencies, the Census Bureau deserves the status of an independent statistical research agency.

We believe that key provisions of H.R. 1254 would elevate the autonomy of the Census Bureau, allowing the Bureau to better focus on its core mission of producing high quality demographic and economic data. We strongly support the appointment of a fixed, five-year term for the Census Bureau Director, which we feel is one of the bill's most important provisions. With such a term, the Director would withstand disruptions caused by changes in administration, especially around the decennial census, and provide greater continuity in the Bureau's operations.

We consider that, in removing the Census Bureau from the Commerce Department, H.R. 1254 relieves the Bureau of additional bureaucratic oversight and involvement and enhances its ability to respond to requests from Congress, the Administration, and data users. Further, we support the fact that an independent Census Bureau would be responsible for its own fate and empowered to make recommendations regarding its funding and programs. The success of an autonomous Census Bureau will depend upon the details of its

independence. We look forward to offering our input as the bill proceeds through the normal legislative process.

Once again, thank you for bringing much needed attention to all of the federal government's statistical agencies. We appreciate your service and look forward to working with you towards the enactment of H.R. 1254. Should you have any questions, please contact Steve Pierson, the ASA Director of Science Policy (703.302.1841; pierson@amstat.org) or Mary Jo Hoeksema, PAA Head of Government Affairs (202-939-5456; paaapc@crosslink.net.)

American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)
American Statistical Association (ASA)
Association of Population Centers (APC)
Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
Latino Census Network
National Association of Latino elected and Appointed
Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund
National Institute for Latino Policy (NILP)
Population Association of America (PAA)
Southeast Michigan Census Council (SEMCC)
Southern Demographic Association (SDA)