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May 30, 2013

The Honorable Thomas Carper
Chair, Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Coburn
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland
Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Carper and Ranking Member Coburn:

As president of the American Statistical Association (ASA) with its 18,000 members, I write to enthusiastically support the nomination of John H. Thompson as director of the U.S. Census Bureau and to urge his swift confirmation.

Thompson is an excellent nominee for census director. His 27 years at the Census Bureau, including executive leadership, means he possesses the requisite skills and extensive experience to immediately and effectively lead the bureau. During his Census Bureau service, Thompson was responsible for all aspects of the well-executed 2000 Census, including management, operations, and methodology. His effective leadership of NORC at the University of Chicago also speaks to his ability to manage and strategically lead a large organization.

Thompson is highly regarded for his expertise and leadership skills by those who work with him and by fellow members of the profession. A noted expert in social science research—with a special emphasis on censuses and large, complex surveys—he is a member of the National Academies' Committee on National Statistics, for which he served on panels to review the preparation and execution of the 2010 Census. He was named a Fellow of the ASA in 2000 in recognition of his vision, strategic thinking, and leadership in planning and executing the 2000 Census. Thompson was awarded the Department of Commerce's Gold Medal and the Presidential Rank Award of Meritorious Executive for his leadership on the 2000 Census. More recently, Thompson was elected the 2011 chair of ASA's Social Statistics Section, the mission of which is to advance methods of statistical inquiry and the measurement and use of statistical data for economic, demographic, and social science purposes.

In summary, John Thompson is an outstanding nominee for director of the U.S. Census Bureau. I highly recommend that the Senate confirm Thompson and urge it do so quickly so he can assume leadership of the bureau during this critical period as the agency prepares for the 2020 Census.

Sincerely,

Marie Davidian, PhD
President, American Statistical Association