



April 24, 2017

Dear Senator:

As you consider funding for the final FY 2017 federal budget and the proposed FY 2018 budget, we respectfully urge you to support robust funding for the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS).

The population and demographic data that are obtained from these two surveys are vital to businesses across America to promote economic development, identify potential customers and create jobs.

The 2020 Census is mandated by the Constitution and the questions included in the ACS are required by law. The combined data are an irreplaceable tool for business and industry. The data allow us to analyze current and trending demographic and economic shifts, and to plan future investments accordingly.

We hope that the final FY 2017 appropriation for the U.S. Census Bureau will be as close as possible to the \$1.52 billion recommended by the Senate Committee on Appropriations (S.2837).

Failure to appropriate sufficient funds now is penny wise and pound foolish. Without proper funding to field-test the new, innovative, IT-focused 2020 Census, the Census Bureau might be forced to revert to the old, traditional paper-and-pencil census taking that would cost taxpayers \$5 billion more.

Additionally, the 2018 End-To-End field test of new, innovative, cost-saving methods to take the 2020 Census – encompassing 700,000 targeted households in Washington State, West Virginia and Rhode Island – means that the FY 2018 Census Bureau budget will need a substantial increase over FY 2017 appropriations.

Finally, we believe that making response to the ACS voluntary would greatly diminish the reliability and availability of ACS data for all communities, especially smaller jurisdictions and rural areas.

Thank you for considering our views as you make difficult decisions about how to allocate resources in the Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Association of Public Data Users  
Council for Community and Economic Research  
Insights Association  
International Council of Shopping Centers  
Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University  
National Association for Business Economics  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of REALTORS®  
National Automobile Dealers Association  
National Multifamily Housing Council  
National Retail Federation