



September 16, 2014

Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

We, the undersigned members of the Census Project (www.thecensusproject.org), are writing to urge sufficient funding in the Fiscal Year 2015 Continuing Resolution (CR) to support timely, thorough continued planning for the 2020 Census and the related American Community Survey. **Without a prompt ramp-up in funding, as we reach the mid-point of the decennial census cycle, the Census Bureau will lose critical opportunities to test promising, but complex, new cost-saving census methods, possibly dooming chances for significant census reform this decade.**

Specifically, *we ask Congress to provide the Census Bureau with some form of funding anomaly in the CR.* While we support a funding anomaly for the Census Bureau at the level approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee for the Periodic Censuses and Programs account (\$896.7 million), we understand this option may not be viable, given the current negotiations and spending limits. Therefore, we urge you, at a minimum, to provide the Census Bureau with some relief in the CR, either in the form of a "non-scoring" anomaly, giving the Bureau more flexibility to spend money in the first quarter of the new fiscal year, or a smaller "scored" anomaly.

Without an anomaly, the Census Bureau will *not* have sufficient funding to conduct the first planned field test *and* begin preparations for the next two, critical April 2015 tests (discussed in more detail below), jeopardizing the entire research and testing program next year. Although the Census Bureau could request permission to reprogram funds from other activities, it cannot scale back ongoing demographic and

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economic surveys and statistical programs without sacrificing data quality or detail, or both.

The justification for this request is very clear to the broad, diverse census stakeholder community.

The Census Bureau's ability to complete 2020 Census research and testing of cost-saving innovations and design updates, including content review for the American Community Survey, and to begin systems and operational development, on schedule, will be at high risk without an anomaly and the ability to "ramp up" in funding at the start of Fiscal Year 2015.

The Census Bureau already has scaled back or postponed key planning activities for the 2020 Census due, in large part, to previous budget cuts and funding delays. In FY2015, the Bureau will conduct four major field tests designed to evaluate, in census-like environments, innovations to improve enumeration efficiency and streamline field operations. Specifically, the tests will assess:

- the feasibility of replacing universal pre-census address canvassing with targeted verification of the Master Address File;
- using automation, real-time data, and administrative records to manage and streamline costly door-to-door follow-up with unresponsive households;
- new strategies to boost self-response, especially on the Internet, as well as methods for pre-registration and processing electronic responses that lack unique identifiers tying them to a specific address;
- revised questions on race and ethnicity;
- language assistance for non-English speakers; and
- improving estimates of mail, on-line, and telephone response, to better control overall costs.

These new initiatives could modernize the census process and reduce costs substantially, but they require thorough testing and evaluation before the Census Bureau can select an optimal design for a cost-effective and accurate census. The bureau must make that decision and begin development of IT and operational infrastructure by the end of FY2015. Further, the timing and outcome of these tests are inter-related. For example, the Census Bureau will apply lessons learned from the address verification test that started this month, to address listing for the two spring tests. If these tests are delayed, cut-back, or eliminated, the Census Bureau cannot incorporate new methods in the 2020 Census design without risking the accuracy of the count in every community in the nation.

Also in 2015, the Census Bureau must complete a comprehensive review of American Community Survey questions, in preparation for a 2015 National Content Test that will inform its required submission to Congress of ACS questions. This review directly addresses congressional concerns about ACS response burden and will ensure that this seminal survey only collects data required for the administration of federal laws and programs.

The uncertainty that accompanies a Continuing Resolution simply does not lend itself to the Census Bureau's unique, cyclical programs, one of which is mandated directly by the U.S. Constitution. The Census Bureau cannot delay its selection of a design framework beyond FY2015; that decision already is a year overdue.

Therefore, we urge you to include some form of funding anomaly for the Census Bureau in the Continuing Resolution. Failure to grant an exception from flat-line funding will jeopardize the Census Bureau's ability to plan a cost-effective, modern, and accurate 2020 Census, the nation's largest peacetime activity and a foundation of our very democracy.

Thank you for considering our views and the importance of our request.

Sincerely,

AAPI Data
 ABG Consulting
 American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)
 American Economic Association's Committee on Economic Statistics
 American Sociological Association
 American Statistical Association
 Arizona Housing Alliance
 Asian American Federation
 Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
 Asian American Psychological Association
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
 Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council
 Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
 Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
 Association of Population Centers
 Association of Public Data Users
 Capital Area Food Bank
 Center for APA Women
 Center for Governmental Research

Connecticut Association for Human Services
 Consortium of Social Science Associations
 Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
 Crescent City Media Group (La.)
 Decision Demographics
 Demos
 Direct Marketing Association
 FairVote - The Center for Voting and Democracy
 First Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Organization for Women
 Future of Scholarly Knowledge
 Gerontological Society of America
 Hmong National Development, Inc.
 Housing Authority of Washington County (Md.)
 Housing Consortium of Everett & Snohomish County (Wash.)
 Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County (Calif.)
 Long Island Housing Services, Inc. (N.Y.)
 MACS-Minnesotans for the American Community Survey
 Marketing Research Association (MRA)
 Maxfield Research Inc.
 Mid-Region Council of Governments (N.M.)
 Midwest Political Science Association
 Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
 Minnesota Council on Foundations
 Minnesota State Demographic Center
 National Apartment Association
 National Association for Business Economics
 National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)
 Educational Fund
 National Association of REALTORS®
 National Association of Towns and Townships
 National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
 National Council of Housing Market Analysts
 National Housing & Rehabilitation Association
 National Housing Conference
 National Housing Law Project
 National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)
 National Multifamily Housing Council
 National WIC Association
 Nazareth Housing Services (Pa.)
 OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates
 Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute (Calif.)
 Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
 Population Association of America

Population Resource Center
Prison Policy Initiative
Public Justice Center
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Research Advisory Services, Inc.
Ribbon Demographics, LLC
South by North Strategies, Ltd.
South Florida Regional Planning Council
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Southern Echo, Inc.
Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium (Wash.)
Tangible LLC
The Jewish Federations of North America
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
William C. Velasquez Institute