June 10, 2016

**SUPPORT FUNDING LEVEL FOR U.S. CENSUS BUREAU IN FY2017 CJS APPROPRIATIONS BILL**
*(Oppose Any Amendments to Reduce the Census Budget)*

Dear Senator:

The undersigned members of the multi-sector, nonpartisan Census Project coalition urge you to support the funding level of $1.52 billion for the U.S. Census Bureau in the FY2017 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill (S. 2837), and to oppose any amendments that would reduce the agency’s budget to pay for other programs in the CJS account or undermine a robust, mandatory American Community Survey (ACS), for which the Appropriations Committee expressed strong support (S. Rpt. 114-239).

The committee allocated only 60 percent of the requested increase for the agency, at a time when the Bureau must “ramp up” spending in preparation for the 2020 Census, the nation’s largest civilian mobilization. In FY2017, the agency must test new counting methods in rural areas and on Tribal lands (as well as in Puerto Rico); finalize questionnaire topics (required by law); finalize decisions regarding sweeping design reforms and finish production of IT and operational systems, in time for an end-to-end readiness test in 2018; acquire space for six Regional Census Centers; begin collecting address list updates from state and local governments (the Local Update of Census Addresses program, required by law); and develop a vast, nimble Integrated Communications Plan to reach an increasingly diverse population efficiently and effectively.

- Without adequate funding next year, the Census Bureau could abandon new, cost-saving methods as too risky or insufficiently vetted — decisions that could increase census costs by billions of dollars, or put the accuracy of the census at grave risk, given Congress’ directive to keep the cost of the 2020 Census at or below the 2010 Census level.

- Alternatively, the Bureau could be forced to scale back other programs, most notably the 2017 Economic Census and American Community Survey (ACS), which are irreplaceable sources of data for key economic indicators and socio-economic characteristics that support government and private sector decision-making. Congress has directed the Census Bureau to reduce the burden of ACS response, while preserving reliable and comprehensive data that guide the allocation of $415 billion annually in federal grants. Budget cuts will continue to slow promising research to accomplish these goals.

*Neither of these outcomes is acceptable or wise!* We understand that appropriators faced difficult choices in a tight fiscal environment. The proposed committee allocation, a cut of $115 million from the budget request, represents a minimum level of funding necessary to keep 2020
Census planning and preparations on track and to preserve a robust 2017 Economic Census and ACS.

_The Census Project_ (www.thecensusproject.org) is a broad coalition of stakeholders who rely on accurate, timely, and comprehensive Census Bureau data for decision-making and resource allocation across all sectors.¹

We cannot overstate the importance of census, ACS, and economic data to the work we all do. Businesses use Census Bureau data to make decisions on location, hiring, products and services, and capital investments that are key to economic growth and community development. State and local governments rely on the Census Bureau’s data to allocate resources, identify communities with special needs, maintain transportation and utility infrastructure, and attract new investment. Equally important, the data underlie our representative democracy and are required for implementation of many civil rights laws. An accurate census and comprehensive ACS help ensure fair political representation — for Congress down to local school boards — and the prudent distribution of federal aid to states and communities each year.

In closing, Census Bureau data are central to sustaining our nation’s democracy, facilitating informed decision-making, and targeting resources effectively and wisely. **We urge you, in the strongest terms, to oppose any efforts to reduce the level of funding provided for the Census Bureau in the committee-passed CJS bill or to weaken the Bureau’s seminal surveys in any other way.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Terri Ann Lowenthal (TerriAnn2K@aol.com), with The Census Project, would be pleased to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Activists With A Purpose                              Grenada, MS
Advocates for Children and Youth                      Maryland
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Alabama State Data Center                              Tuscaloosa, AL
Alameda County Community Food Bank                    Oakland, CA
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Educational Research Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

¹ Our coalition includes national, regional, state, and local organizations in business and industry; state, local, and Tribal government; transportation; housing; education; the labor force; rural economic development; health care; civil rights advancement; and social service and advocates for low-income families and children, the elderly, people with disabilities, veterans, and immigrants and refugees. Please visit our website at www.thecensusproject.org for more information on our activities.
Arizona Housing Alliance
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users
Campaign for Fair Latino Representation  New York, NY
Capital District Regional Planning Commission  Albany, NY
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer  Charlotte, NC
Children First for Oregon
Community at Holy Family Manor  Pittsburgh, PA
Community Home Trust  Chapel Hill, NC
Concerned Citizens For A Better Tunica County  Tunica, MS
Connecticut Association for Human Services
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research  Ithaca, NY
Council for Community and Economic Research
Crescent City Media Group and Open Democracy Project  New Orleans, LA
Decision Demographics  Arlington, VA
Demos
Developmental Disabilities Institute  Detroit, MI
East End NOW  Pennsylvania
Feeding America
First Pittsburgh Chapter, National Organization for Women
Georgia Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda  Atlanta, GA
Gerontological Society of America
Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition  Miami, FL
Hawaii Children’s Action Network
Hunger Free Vermont
Latino Census Network
Long Island Housing Services  New York
Maine Children’s Alliance
Marketing Research Association
Metro St. Louis Coalition for Inclusion and Equity  
St. Louis, MO
Mid-Region Council of Governments  
Albuquerque, NM
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Minneapolis, MN
Minnesota Council on Foundations  

Minnesotans for the American Community Survey  
Minneapolis, MN
Montgomery County, Maryland Community Action Board  

Mountain of Faith Ministries  
Vicksburg, MS
NAACP  

NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
NALEO Educational Fund  

National Association for Business Economics  

National Association of Home Builders  

National Association of REALTORS®  

National Council of Jewish Women  

National Housing Conference  

National Institute for Latino Policy  
New York, NY
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
NC Child  
Raleigh, NC
New Mexico Voices for Children  

New York City Department of City Planning  

Nielsen  

Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc.  
Durant, MS
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates  

Partnership for America's Children  

Pennsylvania National Organization for Women  

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  

Population Association of America  

Prison Policy Initiative  

Program on Applied Demographics, Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY
Progress Mississippi, Inc.  
Jackson, MS
Proyecto Azteca  
San Juan, TX
Proyecto Juan Diego  
Brownsville, TX
Public Justice Center  
Baltimore, MD
Ramsey County  
St. Paul, MN
Research Advisory Services, Inc. Phoenix, AZ
Ribbon Demographics, LLC Brunswick, ME
RLS Demographics, Inc. Albany, NY
South Asian Americans Leading Together-SAALT
South Florida Regional Council
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Southern Coalition for Social Justice Durham, NC
Southern Echo, Inc. Jackson, MS
SouthWest Organizing Project Albuquerque, NM
State Voices
Tangible Consulting Services Minnesota
The Jewish Federations of North America
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Tunica Teens In Action, Inc. Tunica, MS
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)
Virginia Civic Engagement Table Richmond, VA
Voices for Utah Children
Voices for Virginia’s Children
Westchester Children’s Association Westchester County, NY
William C. Velásquez Institute
ZERO TO THREE