

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
H-309, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Honda
Acting Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Acting Ranking Member Honda:

We write to express our strong support for the Administration's Fiscal Year 2017 funding request of \$1.634 billion for the U.S. Census Bureau. We urge your subcommittee to fully fund the request of \$778 million for 2020 Census planning and \$251.1 million for the related American Community Survey.

Congress directed the Census Bureau to keep the cost of the 2020 Census equal to or less than the cost of the 2010 Census. In order to achieve that goal, the Census Bureau is exploring significant reforms to the Census process that would reduce costs and improve accuracy. Developing these new initiatives requires sufficient planning funds. The Bureau is conducting research and operational development on new data collection technology that could save more than \$5 billion over the lifecycle of the Census. Failure to invest in planning and preparation could leave the Census Bureau with no choice but to use traditional counting methods that are expensive and less accurate. Unfortunately, preparations have already been delayed due to budget shortfalls.

This is a critical year of preparation to successfully execute the 2020 Census. In FY2017, the Census Bureau must complete production of interoperable systems to implement a re-designed Census. Some key milestones that must be achieved include starting the Local Update of Census Addresses program in partnership with state and local governments, finalizing questionnaire content and submitting it to Congress, and acquiring Regional Census Centers. Additionally, the Bureau is preparing to perform an End-to-End Readiness test in 2018, requiring completion of the new IT systems.

Beyond preparing for the Census, the Bureau is charged with the important task of managing the American Community Survey (ACS) each year. The importance of the ACS cannot be overstated; it provides Congress, state and local governments, businesses, and social service providers with the objective, reliable data they need to invest wisely, stimulate economic growth, and meet the needs of vulnerable populations like veterans, people with disabilities, older Americans, and low income households.


In 2005 Congress supported development of the ACS as a replacement for the decennial Census long form. Today the ACS is the only source of annually updated demographic, social, and economic data for every community in the nation. The modest funding increase requested for the ACS will support continued efforts to improve the ease of responding and the overall experience

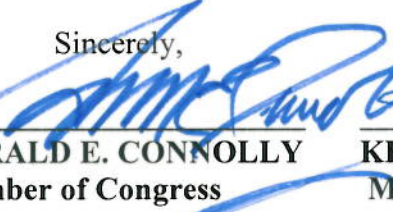
for our constituents and businesses and ensure data quality. Cuts to the ACS budget could mean many U.S. counties and all rural and small communities go uncounted, leaving these areas without sufficient data to guide planning decisions, resource allocation, and initiatives to attract new business investment. Our most vulnerable communities cannot afford cuts to the ACS.

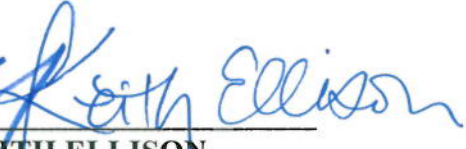
The decennial Census is the nation's largest peacetime activity and the foundation of our representative system of governance, from Congress down to local school boards. Congress itself relies on Census and ACS data to allocate, prudently and fairly, most federal discretionary funding to the communities we represent. The Census must be a budget priority for Congress. We cannot continue to shortchange an activity so fundamental to our democracy and the sustained well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering our views on the Census Bureau's FY2017 budget. We appreciate the challenges your committee faces and look forward to working with you to craft a FY2017 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill that supports the Census Bureau's vital activities.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


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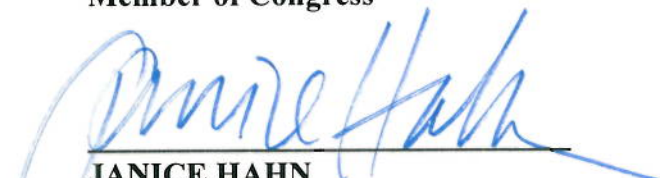

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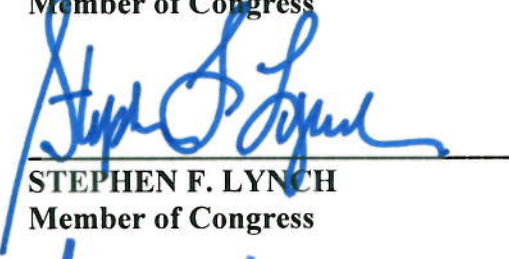

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