

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 4, 2017

The Honorable John Culberson  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science & Related Agencies  
H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José E. Serrano  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science & Related Agencies  
H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano:

As you consider Continuing Appropriations for FY 2018, we respectfully urge you to provide robust funding to the U.S. Census Bureau. FY2018 marks an essential year for 2020 Census planning and testing as well as development for the American Community Survey (ACS).

The 2020 Census is expected to be the largest and most digitally advanced Census ever conducted, embracing new technology and data collection that could save more than \$5 billion over the lifecycle of the Census. Unfortunately, a lack of adequate funding in previous fiscal years has already forced the Census Bureau to cancel 2017 tests of field operations in Puerto Rico, The Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North and South Dakota, and the Colville Reservation and off-reservation trust land in Washington. Appropriating sufficient funding in FY2018 is critical to complete the testing of digital enumeration systems. Failing to do so could cost taxpayers billions of dollars, as the Census Bureau would be forced to revert back to traditional counting methods that threaten both cost effectiveness and accuracy.

FY2018 is a critical year of preparation for a successful 2020 Census during which time the Census Bureau must make final design decisions for and begin to execute the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. This comprehensive test in Providence, Rhode Island, Pierce County, Washington, and Bluefield, West Virginia will count more than 700,000 households in both urban and rural settings using new, web-based systems and operations and will be evaluated as a “dress rehearsal” for the 2020 decennial census. This rehearsal is designed to test the aptitude and readiness of key data technologies, Internet response methods, outreach and promotional elements, as well as the management and response process.

Furthermore, FY2018 marks the peak of the Census Bureau’s Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program, which obtains locality-specific residential and commercial mapping from local jurisdictions across the country. Additionally, the Census Bureau must submit proposed questions for the 2020 decennial census. 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.

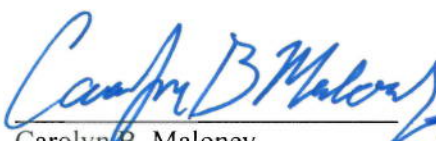
The ACS is the only source of annually updated demographic, social, and economic data for every community in the nation and helps direct \$400 billion in annual federal funding. The modest funding increase requested for the ACS will support continued efforts to improve the ease of responding and the 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.

In closing, the Census Bureau will not be able to adequately test new design systems in a thorough and timely way without sufficient funding in FY 2018. Additionally, as we move closer to 2020, the Census Bureau cannot make up for lost time due to lack of proper funding without compromising the integrity and accuracy of the Census.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter. While we recognize and appreciate the challenges your Committee faces in drafting this legislation, we strongly urge you to provide robust funding for the U.S. Census Bureau so that it may fulfill its Constitutional mandate effectively and accurately.

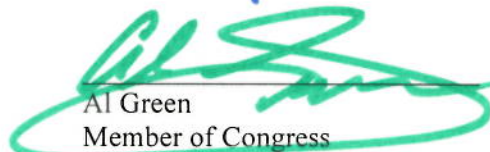
Sincerely,


  
Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress


  
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

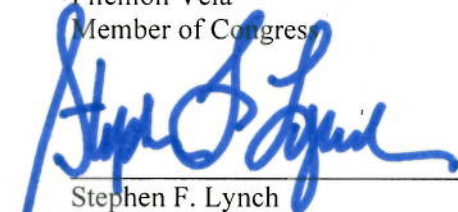
  
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Al Green  
Member of Congress

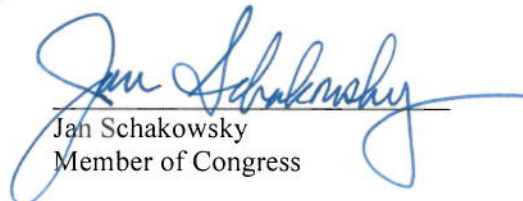
  
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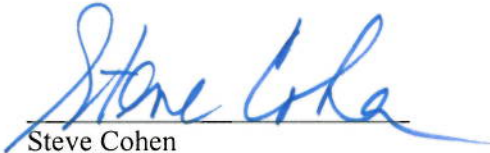
  
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Sander Levin  
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Jan Schakowsky  
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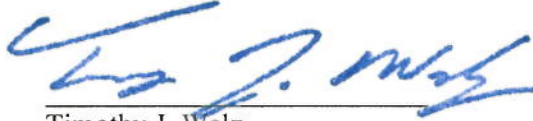




Steve Cohen  
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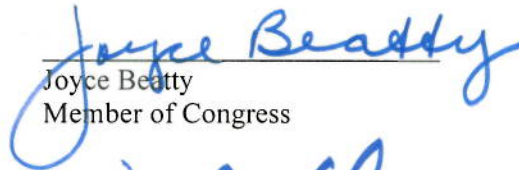
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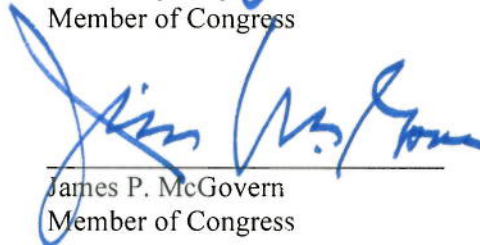
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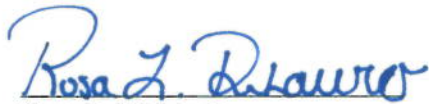
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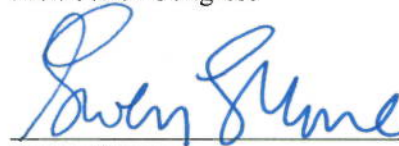
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