



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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May 18, 2015

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TOM COCHRAN

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
2406 Rayburn House Office building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

On behalf of The United States Conference of Mayors, I want to strongly urge your support for full funding of the American Community Survey (ACS) and preliminary activities that must be carried out by the Census Bureau in preparation for the 2020 Census. Further, I urge you to oppose all efforts to make response to the ACS voluntary. We are disappointed that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science approved a funding level for the Census Bureau at \$387 million less than the Administration requested. This significant gap will undoubtedly have an adverse impact on the Census Bureau's ability to conduct the American Community Survey, and on actions the Census Bureau must take soon in order to be prepared to conduct the next census count.

The American Community Survey is vital to the ongoing development of our nation's cities. Data from the survey provides Mayors and other policy-makers up-to-date information annually to help them make informed decisions to address the needs of their citizens. Further, census data from the decennial census and the ACS are used to allocate more than \$415 billion annually to state and local governments for critical services such as education, housing, public safety, transportation, economic development and home energy assistance. Mandatory response to the ACS provides information on residents that shows how the need for these and other federal services differs from one community to the next. A voluntary response would cause local communities with high non-response rates to miss out on funds they are entitled to.

With less than 5 years remaining before the next census count, the Census Bureau needs all of the funds requested by the Administration to begin preparing for the 2020 Census. The Bureau estimates it will need to provide advance notice to more than 130 million households and count roughly 334 million people. This is a huge undertaking to say the least. To achieve a fair and accurate count, Congress must invest now in testing new initiatives and developing the infrastructure needed to ensure that the census is effectively executed.

Again, we urge you to support full funding of the ACS and the Bureau's efforts in preparation for the 2020 Census count. Please feel free to give Larry Jones of the Conference staff a call at 202/861-6709 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director

cc: All Members of the House Appropriations Committee