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Census Project Supports Funding Ramp-Up for Census 2020 and Full Funding for American Community Survey as Congress Holds Hearings on Census Bureau's FY 2016 Budget Request

WASHINGTON-- As a key House panel begins its review today of the Census Bureau's FY 2016 budget request, the Census Project released a [letter](#) to congressional leaders signed by more than 100 organizations across the country, urging full funding for Census 2020 planning and the ongoing American Community Survey (ACS).

The Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations will hear testimony today from Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker on the Census Bureau's budget request of \$1.5 billion, including \$663 million for the 2020 Census. The ACS — the modern version of the census long form — has come under fire in recent years from some lawmakers who oppose government data collection.

"The Bureau has requested \$663 million for 2020 Census planning, a significant but necessary increase more than halfway through the decennial census cycle. This fall, the Census Bureau will announce the design framework for the 2020 Census, drawing on results of in-depth research and testing over the past several years," said the Census Project [letter](#). "The design decision already is a year behind schedule, due to past budget shortfalls, and the bureau must pivot immediately to the systems and operations development phase of the census, as it prepares to execute that design. New initiatives, including an unprecedented use of technology to collect and process census responses, could save more than \$5 billion over the lifecycle cost of the census."

The [Census Project](#) is a collaborative of business, labor, state and local government, civil rights, planning, and professional associations and organizations.

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"We believe that continued investment in modern census methods and operations will yield significant lifecycle cost savings. Failure to develop production systems through a robust acquisitions process and to refine sweeping operational reforms in FY2016 and beyond will put the accuracy of the 2020 Census at risk and almost certainly drive up costs," the Census Project letter concluded.

Also today, with the next census only five years away, the Center for American Progress released a new report, "[Meeting the Challenges of the 2020 Census](#)," co-authored by one of the Census Project's directors. The report calls for changes in the way Congress oversees and funds the decennial census, to ensure prudent, timely planning for the nation's largest peacetime activity.

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