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**Census Project Urges Full Funding in FY 2017 Budget for 2020
Census and American Community Survey**

WASHINGTON - In a letter to congressional leadership released today, the Census Project urged federal policymakers to fully fund the Obama Administration's Fiscal Year 2017 request for the ramp-up to the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS, the modern version of the census long form). Fifty-three organizations from across the country signed the letter to House and Senate Appropriations Committee members, as lawmakers begin the process of setting agency funding levels for the Fiscal Year that starts October 1st.

"The greatest risk to implementation of an accurate, cost-effective census, according to the Bureau's assessment, is a lack of adequate funding to fully evaluate and develop new methods and operations, which would force the Bureau to fall back on outdated, more costly methods," said the Census Project letter. "Continued robust development of census IT architecture, operations, communications, and field infrastructure will allow the Census Bureau to finalize the 2020 Census design and begin end-of-decade preparations in a timely way." The U.S. Census Bureau, an agency of the Commerce Department, must complete development of IT systems and operational components in time for an end-to-end readiness test in early 2018.

The administration is requesting \$778 million, a \$182 million increase, for the next decennial census. In addition, it is requesting \$251 million, an increase of \$7.6 million, for the ACS.

Proposed funding for the 2020 Census in FY 2017 includes a number of cost-saving methods that need to be fully tested before the decennial:

- Finalize decisions on use of administrative records for Nonresponse Follow-up;

- Conduct a final address canvassing test in two sites, to validate the effectiveness of more cost-effective in-office procedures using government records and third-party (commercial) data;
- Acquire space for six Regional Census Centers;
- Develop in-language materials and assistance for limited English proficient households;
- Submit final questionnaire content to Congress by April 1, 2017, in accordance with Title 13, U.S.C.;
- Start the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program, required by Title 13, U.S.C., which allows state and local governments to submit address lists and maps to the Census Bureau, thus helping to ensure universal coverage in the census and reducing the scope of costly field address canvassing; and
- Continue staffing and building cyber-security defenses across all systems and operational applications.

Adequate funding for the ACS also is necessary to maintain a robust sample size that yields valid data for all U.S. communities. "The nation's premier survey produces socio-economic and demographic data that are essential for prudent decision-making and resource allocation by Congress, state and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit agencies," the Census Project letter continued.

"We urge Congress to fully fund the President's FY 2017 budget request for the Census Bureau. A steady funding ramp-up for the 2020 Census is necessary to complete production of IT systems and finalize all operations, in preparation for the 2018 readiness test, and to ensure a fair and accurate, cost-effective census," Census Project stakeholders said. "Adequate funding for the ACS will sustain the availability of high-quality data for all U.S. communities and allow the Census Bureau to continue efforts to address congressional concerns about respondent burden and privacy."

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