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## **Congressional Budget Bills Put 2020 Census Planning and Resources in Jeopardy**

WASHINGTON – As the deadline approaches for an agreement on the Fiscal Year 2016 federal budget, more than 60 stakeholders of the [Census Project](#) have released a [letter to congressional leadership](#) “expressing deep concern over the funding for the 2020 Census at this critical juncture in the decennial planning process.”

The Census Project is a collaborative network that includes organizations representing the interests of business, labor, state and local government, civil rights, child advocacy, and scientific associations, united in their support for the decennial census and American Community Survey.

“The House voted to cut funding for Periodic Censuses and Programs, while the Senate Appropriations Committee approved less than six percent of the President’s requested budget increase,” said the letter to congressional leaders. “The prospect of insufficient resources, plus the uncertainty that accompanies a likely Continuing Resolution, make it difficult to sustain robust, comprehensive planning for the constitutionally mandated population enumeration and the collection of reliable American Community Survey (ACS) data for all communities.”

Congress has directed the Census Bureau to conduct the 2020 Census for less than the \$13 billion cost of the last census. However, as the Census Project letter outlines, this goal is not possible under the proposed funding levels Congress is considering. Congress would “curtail critical testing, scale-up, and implementation of efforts to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the 2020 Census.”

“While many of the bureau’s new initiatives for 2020 are promising and could result, collectively, in up to \$5 billion in savings, the opportunity to

demonstrate the quality of these reforms and build the infrastructure necessary to implement them will be lost if Congress does not provide a sufficient ramp up in funding next year," the Census Project letter continued. "The proposed House and Senate allocations for the 2020 Census already threaten the viability of these new initiatives and could undermine efforts to modernize the census in any significant way without jeopardizing the accuracy of the enumeration of harder-to-count population groups, including rural and low-income residents, people of color, immigrants, and young children."

The Census Project letter concludes by warning that "failure to provide sufficient, timely funding will jeopardize the Census Bureau's ability to plan a cost-effective, modern, and accurate 2020 Census, the nation's largest peacetime activity and the foundation of our democracy."

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