



September 7, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the over 600 members and supporters of The Census Project (www.thecensusproject.org)¹, we are writing to express our opposition to any proposed amendments to H.R. 3354, Make American Secure and Prosperous Act, that would cut funding for the Census Bureau. We urge you to vote against such an amendment.

Oppose Comstock amendment that would cut Census Bureau funding

As you may know, H.R. 3267, the Fiscal Year 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations Act, recommends the Census Bureau receive \$1.507 billion, roughly \$37 million more than the agency's FY 2017 spending level and \$10 million above the Administration's FY 2018 request. Despite being a minor increase, the amount **is woefully inadequate and unrealistic given the significant resources the Census Bureau needs to put Census 2020 preparations back on track and to ensure an accurate, inclusive, and cost-effective decennial census.** The proposed funding ramp-up is also significantly smaller than what both Republican and Democratic administrations have approved between years seven and eight for past decennial censuses. (<https://thecensusproject.org/2017/05/25/trump-census-budget-too-little-too-late/>).

Recent funding shortfalls have compelled the Census Bureau to pause key planning activities, including the advertising campaign and Partnership Program, both of which are imperative for reaching hard-to-count populations. In addition, the agency has canceled two of three test sites for the 2018 End-to-End Census Test—the only integrated test-run of new technologies and operations in a census-like environment. Canceling the 'dress rehearsal' in Pierce County, WA, and several West Virginia counties limits the evaluation of complex new counting methods and IT systems. That is a recipe for an undercount and cost increases.

Any additional cuts in the Census Bureau's bottom line will only further jeopardize Census 2020 preparations. In fact, in a [letter](#) sent to all House offices on September 1, organizations nationwide recently communicated their support for **increasing** the Census Bureau's FY 2018 budget. For these reasons, we urge you to oppose an amendment offered by Congresswoman Comstock (R-VA) that would use the Census Bureau as an offset to fund the Manufacturing Extension Partnership program in the CJS bill.

¹ The Census Project is a diverse network of census stakeholders, including business, civil rights, state and local government, education, housing, health, labor, and human services interests, that support funding for the decennial census.

Thank you for considering our views regarding this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Sparks". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Phil Sparks
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Jo Hoeksema". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Mary Jo Hoeksema
Deputy Director