



June 13, 2016

***SUPPORT FUNDING LEVEL FOR U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
IN FY2017 CJS APPROPRIATIONS BILL
(Oppose Any Amendments to Reduce the Census Budget)***

Dear Representative:

The undersigned members of the multi-sector, nonpartisan Census Project coalition urge you to **support the funding level of \$1.47 billion for the U.S. Census Bureau** when the House considers the FY2017 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill (H.R. 5393), and to **oppose any amendments that would reduce the agency's budget to pay for other programs in the CJS account or undermine a robust, mandatory American Community Survey (ACS).**

The committee allocated only 38 percent of the requested increase for the agency at a time when the Bureau must “ramp up” spending in preparation for the 2020 Census, the nation’s largest civilian mobilization. In FY2017, the agency must test new counting methods in *rural areas* and on *Tribal lands* (as well as in Puerto Rico); *finalize* questionnaire topics (required by law); *finalize* decisions regarding sweeping design reforms and *finish* production of IT and operational systems, in time for an end-to-end readiness test in 2018; *acquire space* for six Regional Census Centers; *begin collecting* address list updates from state and local governments (the Local Update of Census Addresses program, required by law); and *develop* a vast, nimble Integrated Communications Plan to reach an increasingly diverse population efficiently and effectively.

- Without adequate funding next year, the Census Bureau could abandon new, cost-saving methods as too risky or insufficiently vetted — decisions that could *increase* census costs by *billions of dollars*, or put the accuracy of the census at grave risk, given Congress’ directive to keep the cost of the 2020 Census at or below the 2010 Census level.
- Alternatively, the Bureau could be forced to scale back other programs, most notably the 2017 Economic Census and American Community Survey (ACS), which are irreplaceable sources of data for key economic indicators and socio-economic characteristics that support government and private sector decision-making. Congress has directed the Census Bureau to reduce the burden of ACS response, while preserving reliable and comprehensive data that guide the allocation of \$415 billion annually in federal grants. Budget cuts will continue to slow promising research to accomplish these goals.

Neither of these outcomes is acceptable or wise! We understand that appropriators faced difficult choices in a tight fiscal environment. However, the proposed committee allocation, a cut of \$164 million from the budget request, already puts at risk a robust schedule for final 2020

Census planning and early preparations, as well as a comprehensive 2017 Economic Census and ACS.

The Census Project (www.thecensusproject.org) is a broad coalition of stakeholders who rely on accurate, timely, and comprehensive Census Bureau data for decision-making and resource allocation across all sectors.¹

We cannot overstate the importance of census, ACS, and economic data to the work we all do. Businesses use Census Bureau data to make decisions on location, hiring, products and services, and capital investments that are key to economic growth and community development. State and local governments rely on the Census Bureau's data to allocate resources, identify communities with special needs, maintain transportation and utility infrastructure, and attract new investment. Equally important, the data underlie our representative democracy and are required for implementation of many civil rights laws. An accurate census and comprehensive ACS help ensure fair political representation — for Congress down to local school boards — and the prudent distribution of federal aid to states and communities each year.

In closing, Census Bureau data are central to sustaining our nation's democracy, facilitating informed decision-making, and targeting resources effectively and wisely. **We urge you, in the strongest terms, to oppose any efforts to reduce further the level of funding provided for the Census Bureau in the committee-passed CJS bill or to weaken the Bureau's seminal surveys in any other way.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Terri Ann Lowenthal (TerriAnn2K@aol.com), with The Census Project, would be pleased to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Activists With A Purpose

Advocates for Children and Youth

Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Alabama State Data Center

Alameda County Community Food Bank

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Educational Research Association

American Sociological Association

American Statistical Association

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Grenada, MS

Maryland

Tuscaloosa, AL

Oakland, CA

¹ Our coalition includes national, regional, state, and local organizations in business and industry; state, local, and Tribal government; transportation; housing; education; the labor force; rural economic development; health care; civil rights advancement; and social service and advocates for low-income families and children, the elderly, people with disabilities, veterans, and immigrants and refugees. Please visit our website at www.thecensusproject.org for more information on our activities.

Arizona Housing Alliance	
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)	
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC	
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council	
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations	
Association of Population Centers	
Association of Public Data Users	
Campaign for Fair Latino Representation	New York, NY
Capital District Regional Planning Commission	Albany, NY
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Quality of Life Explorer	Charlotte, NC
Children First for Oregon	
Community at Holy Family Manor	Pittsburgh, PA
Community Home Trust	Chapel Hill, NC
Concerned Citizens For A Better Tunica County	Tunica, MS
Connecticut Association for Human Services	
Consortium of Social Science Associations	
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research	Ithaca, NY
Council for Community and Economic Research	
Crescent City Media Group and Open Democracy Project	New Orleans, LA
Decision Demographics	Arlington, VA
Demos	
Developmental Disabilities Institute	Detroit, MI
East End NOW	Pennsylvania
Feeding America	
First Pittsburgh Chapter, National Organization for Women	
Georgia Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda	Atlanta, GA
Gerontological Society of America	
Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition	Miami, FL
Hawaii Children's Action Network	
Hunger Free Vermont	
Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University	
Latino Census Network	
Long Island Housing Services	New York
Maine Children's Alliance	

Marketing Research Association	
Metro St. Louis Coalition for Inclusion and Equity	St. Louis, MO
Mid-Region Council of Governments	Albuquerque, NM
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce	Minneapolis, MN
Minnesota Council on Foundations	
Minnesotans for the American Community Survey	Minneapolis, MN
Montgomery County, Maryland Community Action Board	
Mountain of Faith Ministries	Vicksburg, MS
NAACP	
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.	
NALEO Educational Fund	
National Association for Business Economics	
National Association of Home Builders	
National Association of REALTORS®	
National Council of Jewish Women	
National Housing Conference	
National Institute for Latino Policy	New York, NY
National Low Income Housing Coalition	
NC Child	Raleigh, NC
New Mexico Voices for Children	
New York City Department of City Planning	
Nielsen	
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc.	Durant, MS
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates	
Partnership for America's Children	
Pennsylvania National Organization for Women	
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children	
Population Association of America	
Prison Policy Initiative	
Program on Applied Demographics, Cornell University	Ithaca, NY
Progress Mississippi, Inc.	Jackson, MS
Proyecto Azteca	San Juan, TX
Proyecto Juan Diego	Brownsville, TX
Public Justice Center	Baltimore, MD

Ramsey County	St. Paul, MN
Research Advisory Services, Inc.	Phoenix, AZ
Ribbon Demographics, LLC	Brunswick, ME
RLS Demographics, Inc.	Albany, NY
South Asian Americans Leading Together-SAALT	
South Florida Regional Council	
Southeast Michigan Census Council	
Southern Coalition for Social Justice	Durham, NC
Southern Echo, Inc.	Jackson, MS
SouthWest Organizing Project	Albuquerque, NM
State Voices	
Tangible Consulting Services	Minnesota
The Jewish Federations of North America	
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights	
Tunica Teens In Action, Inc.	Tunica, MS
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)	
Virginia Civic Engagement Table	Richmond, VA
Voices for Utah Children	
Voices for Virginia's Children	
Westchester Children's Association	Westchester County, NY
William C. Velásquez Institute	
ZERO TO THREE	