



Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby:

We are writing to urge you, as a prospective conferee on the Fiscal Year 2007 Science, State, Justice, and Commerce Appropriations bill, to **increase funding for the U.S. Census Bureau**, to help ensure uninterrupted preparations for the 2010 census and continuation of the full American Community Survey (ACS). Funding levels approved by the House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations Committee could jeopardize the accuracy of the next census and increase costs substantially, as well as eliminate other key economic and demographic statistical programs that are important to policymakers.

As you know, the House approved amendments cutting \$58.3 million from the Census Bureau's proposed Fiscal Year 2007 budget. \$53.3 million of that amount would directly affect planning for the 2010 census (which includes the ACS), placing the accuracy and cost-effectiveness of the census at great risk. At a House Appropriations Committee hearing in July, Census Director C. Louis Kincannon testified that the bureau would abandon plans to use hand-held computers to update pre-census address lists and gather data from unresponsive households, if Congress ratified a \$53 million cut to the proposed 2007 budget for the 2010 census. *Reverting to a paper-based census would cost nearly \$1 billion more and jeopardize efforts to improve coverage of hard-to-count populations and to make the enumeration more efficient.*

2007 is a pivotal year in the census planning cycle. By law, the Census Bureau must submit proposed topics for the census to Congress by April 1, 2007, and finalize the questions for submission in 2008. It must prepare for the 2008 Census Dress Rehearsal, the only dry-run of the full census process. Key preparations include final development of GPS-equipped hand-held computers for data collection, address listing and block canvassing operations, and opening and staffing local census offices. The Census Bureau also will award a contract for the 2010 census promotion and outreach campaign, and continue to administer large contracts to deploy critical data processing systems. *None of these activities can be postponed until more funding is available in future years. All significant components of the 2010 census plan must be evaluated in the dress rehearsal in order to minimize risk and ensure their integrity for the actual enumeration.*

Full implementation of the ACS also is a central component of a re-engineered census. In order to serve as a reliable, comparable replacement for the traditional census long form, the ACS must collect data from the entire population, including people living in group quarters such as college dorms, nursing homes, military barracks, and prisons. Director Kincannon testified in July that the Census Bureau is considering the elimination of group quarters from the ACS if Congress does not allocate sufficient funds in 2007.

The House and Senate committee marks for the Census Bureau also would adversely affect non-census statistical programs that produce key data on our economy and demographic trends. According to Director Kincannon, data series that the Census Bureau might eliminate include the Current Industrial Reports, which measure manufacturing and are a component of GDP; County Business Patterns report, which provides the only county level data outside of the Economic Census; and coverage of small manufacturers in the congressionally-mandated Quarterly Financial Reports.

We recognize that conferees must consider many important programs in a tight fiscal environment. We believe that adequate funding for the census in FY2007 is a wise and necessary investment and will help ensure that fiscal policy, private and public investments, and the allocation of billions of federal program dollars are based on accurate, reliable information.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Sally T. Hillsman, Ph.D., Executive Officer
American Sociological Association

Asian American Justice Center

Association of Population Centers

Deborah A. Gona, Ph.D., President
Association of Public Data Users

Helen Samhan, Executive Director
Arab American Institute Foundation

Coalition on Human Needs

Howard J. Silver, Executive Director
Consortium of Social Science Associations

Council for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR)

Edward J. Spar, Executive Director
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

National Association of Counties

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO Educational Fund)

Population Association of America

Population Resource Center

Patricia C. Becker
The Southeast Michigan Census Council

Urban and Regional Information Systems Association Board of Directors

U.S. Conference of Mayors