

Testimony on behalf of the
Population Association of America/ Association of Population Centers

Regarding the Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations for the

Census Bureau

and

National Science Foundation

Submitted to the

Senate Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Chair

Submitted by

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Introduction

Thank you, Senator Mikulski, Senator Shelby, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, for this opportunity to express support for the Census Bureau and the National Science Foundation (NSF), two agencies important to the Population Association of America and the Association of Population Centers (PAA/APC).

Background on the PAA/APC and Demographic Research

The PAA is an interdisciplinary, scientific organization comprised of over 3,000 research professionals, including demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians. The APC is a similar organization comprised of over 30 universities and research groups that foster collaborative demographic research and data sharing, translate basic population research for policy makers, and provide educational and training opportunities in population studies.

Demography is the study of populations and how and why they change. Demographers, as well as other population researchers, collect and analyze data on trends in births, deaths, immigration and disabilities as well as racial, ethnic and socioeconomic changes in populations. Among the major policy issues, population researchers study the demographic causes and consequences of population aging, trends in fertility, marriage, divorce and their effects on the health and well being of children, and immigration and migration and how these patterns affect the ethnic and cultural diversity of our population and the nation's health and environment.

PAA/APC members rely on a number of federal agencies charged with funding demographic research and generating reliable, accessible data. The ability of our members to produce meaningful research, often used to inform policy decisions, requires the use of substantial data sets and support for research projects and research training.

The Census Bureau

The Census Bureau is the premier source of information about the American people and the U.S. economy. In addition to the decennial census and the American Community Survey, the Census supports a variety of surveys to measure changes in individual and household demographic and economic conditions. PAA and APC members rely on accessible data produced by the Census Bureau to conduct their research.

National Science Foundation

The mission of NSF is to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense. The demography of our population directly impacts the health, prosperity, welfare, and security of our nation. NSF support of demographic research, particularly its support of large-scale longitudinal surveys, such as the General Social Survey and Panel Study of Income Dynamics, is

central to the agency's mission and essential for the field of population research. NSF provides about 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America's colleges and universities, including basic behavioral and social research. Demographic research also depends on support from NSF for support of individual research projects and research centers.

Recommendations

PAA and APC urge you to support the Administration's request for the Census Bureau, which is \$1.23 billion in Fiscal Year 2008. Substantial preparation is required to ensure the success of an accurate 2010 Census and fully implemented American Community Survey. In 2008, the Census Bureau will be conducting the only dress rehearsal of the decennial census. The rehearsal, which will be conducted in San Joaquin County, California, and nine counties in the Fayetteville area of North Carolina, will evaluate the integrated census plan in a census-like environment. Also, in 2008, the Bureau will design and test a system for capturing and processing census data, open 12 regional census centers nationwide, and verify address information submitted by state, local, and Tribal governments. All of these key planning, or ramping up, activities are central to the success of the 2010 Census. Thus, it is imperative the Bureau receive the Administration's request in 2008. Receiving anything less than the President's request, jeopardizes the accuracy of the 2010 Census, increasing the chances of over counts, undercounts, and, ultimately, geographic misallocations of federal resources, and threatens the availability of key demographic and economic data researchers and policymakers require.

PAA and APC, as members of the Coalition for National Science Funding, support the President's budget request for NSF in FY 2008, which is \$6.43 billion. This budget will enable the NSF Social, Behavioral and Economic Science Directorate (SBE) to continue its support of social science surveys and a rich population research portfolio. Furthermore, the proposed budget will enable SBE to fully implement the Science of Science and Innovation Policy initiative. The goal of this initiative is to develop an evidence-based platform from which policymakers and researchers may assess the impacts of the Nation's science and engineering enterprise.

The Census Bureau and the National Science Foundation support, indirectly and directly, the collection and availability of rich data sources to PAA/APC members. Our economists, statisticians, and social survey design experts rely on federally supported data to conduct their research and inform public policy. Investments in these data sets are investments in good policy.

Thank you for considering our requests and for supporting federal programs that benefit the field of demographic research.