



December 20, 2013

Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Appropriations
S-146A The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

As your committee considers final spending levels for Fiscal Year 2014 in accordance with the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, we urge you to *support the President's budget request for the **U.S. Census Bureau** — included in the Senate Appropriations Committee mark (S. 1329) — and to ensure a continued ramp-up in funding for thorough and timely 2020 Census planning and a robust American Community Survey.*¹

Sequestration, across-the-board budget cuts, and Continuing Resolutions have forced the Census Bureau to delay, streamline, or cancel many 2020 Census research and testing projects. The bureau has made hard choices about how to allocate limited resources, to ensure comprehensive evaluation of promising new methods and operational reforms that could reduce the overall cost of the census by billions of dollars. For example, the bureau has detailed dozens of 2020 Census staff members to other parts of the agency in order to pay for a test of adaptive design methods this fall and a site test of electronic contact methods and response options next summer (originally planned for spring 2014).

The agency also has delayed or scaled back research into modernizing the work of census enumerators through greater use of technology, the quality of administrative records databases that could guide more efficient door-to-door visits and improve census accuracy, enumeration of special

¹ *The Census Project* (www.thecensusproject.org) is a long-standing coalition of census stakeholders that includes state and local governments, business and industry, civil rights and labor groups, housing and child advocates, and research organizations that support an accurate and comprehensive census (of which the ACS is a part).

populations, processing census returns that lack a geographic identification code, and many other activities that will help ensure an efficient, modern, and high quality decennial census. An important Content Test for the American Community Survey (ACS), which will help address congressional concerns about the survey's response burden and usefulness of ACS data, will take place a year later than originally planned, leaving less time to evaluate the results before a legal deadline for submitting the survey topics to Congress.

The Census Bureau is focusing its reduced resources on developing fundamental design changes that will increase self-response, streamline nonresponse follow-up through automation, and use information previously provided to the government to reduce costly address canvassing and door-to-door visits. But it has postponed by a year the critical selection of a design framework that will allow it to move forward with systems and operational development. Further testing delays and cancellation of important research could compromise the Census Bureau's ability to balance the need for cost containment with its goal of counting accurately a geographically, culturally, and demographically diverse population.

The \$982.5 million FY2014 request represents a modest but essential ramp-up on the road to Census 2020. Our nation can ill afford the cost of repeating an outdated census design — or the consequences of a poorly planned enumeration and scaled-down American Community Survey that a lack of sufficient investment now could precipitate.

Sincerely,

Barbara Byrant, Former Director of the U.S. Census Bureau
 Alameda County Community Food Bank
 American Sociological Association
 American Statistical Association
 Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
 Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote - Michigan
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
 Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (A3PCON)
 Asian Services In Action
 Association for University Business and Economic Research
 Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
 Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
 Association of Population Centers
 Boat People SOS - California
 Center for Governmental Research

Center for Public Policy Priorities (TX)
Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC)
CHOW Project (Honolulu, HI)
Coalition for Asian American Children & Families
Community Action Partnership
Community Action, Inc.
Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Decision Demographics
Demos
Direct Marketing Association
Education Equals Making Community Connections
First Pittsburgh Chapter, National Organization for Women, Inc. (NOW)
Greater New Orleans Community Data Center
Hep Free Hawaii (Honolulu, HI)
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County
Japanese American Citizens League
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Julian Samora Research Institute
Latino Census Network
League of American Bicyclists
Marketing Research Association
Michigan League for Public Policy
Midwest Asian Health Association (MAHA)
Midwest Political Science Association
NAACP
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association of Towns and Townships
National Council of Asian & Pacific Islander Physicians
National Employment Law Project
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Housing Law Project
National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)
National Priorities Project
National WIC Association
Nazareth Housing Services
New Mexico Asian Family Center
Ohio Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Council
PathWays PA
Population Association of America
Population Resource Center
Prison Policy Initiative
Project Vote

Research Advisory Services, Inc.
Ribbon Demographics
Social & Economic Sciences Research Center
South Asian American Voices For Impact
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
South Asian Network
South by North Strategies, Ltd.
South Florida Regional Planning Council
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition