

February 21, 2017

The Honorable Mike Lee
U.S. Senate
361A Russell SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Gosar
U.S. House of Representatives
504 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Lee and Congressman Gosar,

The undersigned organizations are writing with regard to S. 103 and H.R. 482, legislation you recently introduced regarding Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations.

As you know, this bill provides that “...no Federal funds may be used to design, build, maintain, utilize, or provide access to a Federal database of geospatial information on community racial disparities or disparities in access to affordable housing,” in addition to nullifying the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulation.

It is our belief that this legislation could foster racial discrimination and have far-reaching consequences on federally-sponsored research on racial disparities, as well as on federal human health programs; census issues; education programs, including services for children; federal housing programs; Department of Justice programs; and other critical programs. Our association members often conduct research or provide services – some of which is federally funded – using geospatial information related to racial and other disparities, and we fear that the enactment of this legislation could have a damaging effect on a wide range of Americans and their communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact John Wertman at the American Association of Geographers at jwertman@aag.org or (202) 234-1450 if you have any questions about this issue or

would like to set up a meeting with representatives from our organizations to discuss the policy implications of these restrictions to the use of and access to geospatial data and racial disparities information.

Sincerely,

American Association of Geographers
American Anthropological Association
American Educational Research Association
American Geographical Society
American Geosciences Institute
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
Association of Research Libraries
Cartography and Geographic Information Society
Center for Global Policy Solutions
ChangeLab Solutions
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Economic Policy Institute Policy Center
GIS Certification Institute
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Institute for the Study of "Race" & Social Justice
Midwest Political Science Association
NAACP
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Collaborative for Health Equity
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
National States Geographic Information Council
North American Regional Science Council
Poverty and Race Research Action Council
Rural Sociological Society
Society for Research in Child Development
The City Project
University Consortium for Geographic Information Science
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association