



The Census Project

November 19, 2008

Dear President-Elect Obama:

We are writing to you as members of the Census Project (www.thecensusproject.org), a collaboration of state and local governments, civil rights and labor groups, housing and child advocates, businesses, and research organizations that support a fair and accurate Census 2010. On behalf of the thousands of constituents our organizations represent we congratulate you on your election and look forward to working with you and your new administration.

The importance of the decennial census cannot be overstated. Its results are central to our democracy, affecting not only apportionment and congressional boundaries, but also the distribution of approximately \$300 billion in federal aid to states and localities each year.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently published a list of urgent issues facing the next administration, which includes the 2010 census. The 2010 census is rapidly approaching and some of the most central planning activities affecting the accuracy of the census must occur early in 2009.

Simply put, preparations for the next decennial census are at a sensitive juncture. To ensure the best count possible in 2010, the needs of the Census Bureau must be one of your administration's top priorities. Respectfully, we urge you and your transition team to take the following steps:

- **Nominate new director**—The Census Bureau cannot afford to be without strong, knowledgeable leadership this close to the 2010 decennial census. We encourage you to nominate a director soon, so the Senate can initiate the confirmation process and approve a nominee early in 2009. We encourage you to nominate someone who has strong management expertise and intimate knowledge of all of the Bureau's programs and surveys and not just its decennial census operations.
- **Submit FY 2010 budget request**—The Census Bureau's 2010 budget request should be articulated and sent to the Hill for review and approval in a timely manner.
- **Assess critical challenges for the 2010 census**—Given the timing of the 2010 census, your administration should act quickly to assess the state of the current plans and address the most time-sensitive policy issues. For example, the Community Partnership program is designed to encourage Census 2010 participation by historically undercounted communities and must be fully implemented as soon as possible.

Although all functions of the federal government are essential, planning and implementation of the decennial census are unique. Census preparations cannot be delayed without putting the accuracy of the decennial census at risk. The beginning of your Administration coincides with the most significant period in the 2010 decennial census plans. The members of the Census Project are prepared to help you during this phase and to work with you to achieve an accurate and fair census. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Once again, congratulations on your election. We wish you and your administration all the best in the future.

Sincerely,

Louis Kincannon
Former Director, U.S. Census Bureau

American Sociological Association

American Statistical Association

Asian American Justice Center

Association of Population Centers

The City of New York

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics

Japanese American Citizens League

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

Howard Fienberg
Director of Government Affairs
Marketing Research Association

Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)

Linda Loubert, Ph.D.
Political Economist
Research Associate
Morgan State University

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

National Congress of American Indians

Angelo Falcón
National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)
Latino Census Network

National Low Income Housing Coalition

Population Association of America

Jane S. DeLung
President Emeritus
Population Resource Center

Bob Walker
President
Population Resource Center