



September 9, 2011

Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Room S 128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye:

We are writing to urge the Committee on Appropriations to allocate sufficient funding in Fiscal Year 2012 for the U.S. Census Bureau and to reject the steep budget cut adopted by the House Appropriations Committee in H.R. 2596. As you can see from the diverse range of organizations signing this letter, the Census Bureau's work touches every community and every economic and social sector in this country.

***The House committee's recommendation of \$855.4 million, which is 25 percent below the Census Bureau's FY 2011 spending level, puts vital data collection programs in jeopardy and could cripple the agency's ability to achieve significant savings in the future through innovative methods and greater use of technology. Specifically, the Census Bureau is likely to cancel the 2012 Economic Census, a cornerstone of the nation's economic measurements and source of data for the Gross Domestic Product and national income and product accounts.***

The Census Bureau has already demonstrated its commitment to cost reduction by taking bold steps to streamline operations. In June, the Director announced plans to realign the agency's field structure by permanently closing six regional offices, reducing costs by an estimated \$15 million to \$18 million annually beginning in 2014. Further, in its FY 2012 budget request, the Census Bureau outlined plans to terminate nine programs, including popular products such as the Statistical Abstract and Current Industrial Reports, reaping over \$15 million in savings this year. In addition to eliminating programs, the Bureau has demonstrated its determination to use its funding wisely, making modest investments in required activities to help save billions of future dollars, especially with respect to conducting the 2020 Census and the ongoing American Community Survey. For example, continuous updating of the Master Address File throughout the decade — a proposed new initiative — would save hundreds of millions of dollars alone by eliminating the need for comprehensive pre-census address canvassing in 2019.

Regrettably, the House Appropriations Committee mark for the Census Bureau will compel the agency to cut core programs. A reduction of \$169 million from the President's request puts in doubt the Census Bureau's ability to conduct the 2012 Quinquennial Economic Census, required by Congress in 1954. The Economic Census provides core information on virtually all non-farm businesses and related data on business expenditures, commodity flows, and minority and women-owned businesses. It is a fundamental building block of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and national income and product accounts. Fiscal Year 2012 is the third year of the six-year 2012 Economic Census funding cycle. This benchmark census cannot simply be scaled back because public and private sector decision-makers would be left without a thorough picture of the nation's economic health and prospects.

*Abandoning plans for this important assessment of economic activity across diverse sectors would be foolhardy at a time when data are an essential component of the roadmap to economic recovery and progress and job creation.*

Alternatively, the Census Bureau would have to eliminate key final components of the 2010 Census, such as the Count Question Resolution Program, under which local governments have challenged potential undercounts, and Census Coverage Measurement results, which will tell us how accurate the 2010 Census was and guide methodological decisions for the next enumeration. Other core programs at risk include the American Community Survey (ACS), the seminal source of annual socioeconomic and demographic data about the nation used by decision-makers in the private sector and at all levels of government to allocate limited resources and guide investment decisions. For FY 2012, the Bureau requested \$5 million to test innovations in the American Community Survey, such as an Internet response option, that will contribute substantially to controlling the cost of the 2020 Census.

We understand the fiscal environment requires Congress to make difficult decisions and curtail current spending. The Census Bureau clearly appreciates the dilemma facing Congress, having already proposed cuts in its FY 2012 budget and significant streamlining of operations through administrative actions. Additional cuts will be counterproductive to an agency whose data are essential to running our government, informing our policies, and influencing economic productivity. **We encourage you to support sufficient funding to preserve key Census Bureau programs, as proposed by the President in his FY2012 budget request, and to reject the dangerously low funding level your House colleagues proposed for this essential statistical agency.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important and urgent matter.

Sincerely,

American Association for Public Opinion Research  
 American Association of People with Disabilities  
 American Educational Research Association  
 American Planning Association  
 American Sociological Association  
 American Statistical Association

Arab American Institute and Foundation  
 Asian American Justice Center, member of Asian American Center for  
 Advancing Justice  
 Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
 Asian Pacific American Legal Center, a Member of Asian American Center for  
 Advancing Justice  
 Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations  
 Association of Population Centers  
 Association of Public Data Users  
 Association of University Business and Economic Research  
 Community Action Partnership  
 Consortium of Social Science Associations  
 Council for Community and Economic Research  
 Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics  
 Demos  
 FairVote  
 Human Rights Campaign  
 Japanese American Citizens League  
 Latino Census Network  
 Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
 The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
 Marketing Research Association  
 Moving Forward Gulf Coast, Inc.  
 National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)  
 Educational Fund  
 National Coalition on Black Civic Participation  
 National Congress of American Indians  
 National Education Association  
 National Institute for Latino Policy  
 National Low Income Housing Coalition  
 National Urban League  
 Nonprofit VOTE  
 Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA)  
 Population Association of America  
 Population Reference Bureau  
 Population Resource Center  
 Prison Policy Initiative  
 Project Vote  
 South Asian Americans Leading Together  
 South Asian Network  
 Southern Echo  
 Southwest Voter Registration Education Project  
 Voto Latino  
 William C. Velasquez Institute

cc: The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
 All members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations