



August 15, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

We are writing to express our disappointment with the Census Bureau's proposed funding level in **H.R. 2596, the Fiscal Year 2012 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill**, and to encourage you to restore all or some of the funds the Administration requested for this essential scientific agency when the full House considers this bill in the coming weeks. As you can see from the diverse range of organizations signing this letter, the Census Bureau's work touches virtually every community and every economic and social sector in this country.

The 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 accounts.

The Census Bureau has already demonstrated its commitment to reducing costs 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.

The committee mark for the Census Bureau will compel the agency to cut core programs. The cut 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 socio-economic and demographic data about the nation used by decision-makers in the private sector and at all levels of government to allocate limited resources. 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 any attempts to cut the agency's budget further in the full House.**

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
Asian Pacific American Legal Center, a Member of Asian American Center for
Advancing Justice
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
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 for Business Economics (NABE)
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: All members of the U.S. House of Representatives