

THE CENSUS PROJECT

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U.S. Census Bureau Director
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2009-2012

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1998

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2012-2013

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U.S. Census Bureau Director
1998-2001

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U.S. Census Bureau Director
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National Association of Latino Elected and
Appointed Officials (NALEO) Education Fund

October 21, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Murray, Senator Collins, Representative Cole, and Representative DeLauro,

As you negotiate final Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations measures, including the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill, we, as affiliates of [The Census Project](#), are writing to express our support for ensuring the U.S. Census Bureau receives no less than the amount recommended by the Senate Appropriations Committee, \$1.57 billion. Further, we are writing to express our concerns regarding potential policy provisions proposed in the House CJS appropriations bill that could severely undermine the ability of the agency to deliver high-quality, accurate data.

As you know, The Census Project is a coalition of over 800 national, state, and local organizations representing data users and census stakeholders in the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors that support the mission of the U.S. Census Bureau. We are especially united in our support for an accurate, cost-effective, and inclusive decennial census and American Community Survey (ACS).

FY 2025 Appropriations

The decennial census is the nation's largest civilian peacetime mobilization, determining not only apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives, but also the allocation of approximately \$1.5 trillion in annual federal funding. Fiscal Year 2025 marks the midpoint in the decade-long planning process for the 2030 Census in which preparations and costs begin to exponentially increase. In FY 2025, the Bureau will finalize plans and preparations for the 2026 Census Test, the first of two major field tests. The outcome of these tests will inform key

facets of the 2030 Census. We know from the last decade how inadequate funding mid-decade adversely affected the conduct of the 2020 Census.

When Congress failed to meet the Administration's request for 2020 Census planning in Fiscal Years 2012-2017, the Census Bureau had to cancel every planned test in a rural area and on American Indian reservations, including two of three dress rehearsal sites in 2018. After the census, the Bureau's check of its work showed a net undercount of 5.64 percent on American Indian reservations, and a net undercount of 2.58 percent in areas counted with a modified census packet delivery method called "Update/Leave," which is used primarily in rural areas.

As this example illustrates, postponing planning for decennial operations introduces greater risk to a successful outcome. Further, adequate support for decennial census preparations **now** will reduce the risk of requiring unplanned, additional funding in the peak years at the end of the decade.

The funding levels recommended by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees pose dramatically different outlooks for the U.S. Census Bureau. The funding level recommended by the House Appropriations Committee, \$1.354 billion, is the same funding level that the Subcommittee recommended in Fiscal Year 2024. It is also below the agency's final FY 2024 funding level and the Administration's budget request. On the other hand, the Senate recommended level is essentially equal to the President's budget request.

This is exactly the wrong time in the ramp up to the 2030 Census for Congress to cut funding for the U.S. Census Bureau. The agency needs robust, sustained funding, especially at this point in the decennial census planning process, to proceed with critical planning activities that will ensure the success of the 2030 Census. In addition, the agency needs the Senate recommended funding level to pursue necessary innovations to modernize and restore, among other things, the Current Population Survey and Survey of Income and Program Participation and to keep its broader data collection and dissemination initiatives on schedule. Reduced funding for the Census Bureau at this juncture threatens the stability of these vital initiatives which, if fully supported, could transform how the Census Bureau performs and inspire greater efficiencies throughout the federal statistical system.

Policy Provisions

The House version of the FY 2025 CJS appropriations bill includes policy provisions that would adversely affect the quality and availability of census survey data—especially for small populations and areas. We are particularly concerned about the potential implications of Section 621: *"None of the funds in this Act may be used to enforce involuntary compliance, or to inquire more than twice for voluntary compliance with any survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census."*

If adopted, this language could potentially prohibit enforcement of the mandatory response requirement on the decennial headcount and the American Community Survey (ACS), while

also restricting the Bureau's ability to conduct non-response follow-up operations across all of its surveys. This provision would have a devastating impact on the decennial census, which historically has had to send more than two invitations to self-respond in order to count more than half of U.S. households. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Census 2020 Non-Response Follow Up operations, the two-contact strategy would have meant that 17 million U.S. households, or 38.5% of the non-responding households, would have gone uncounted in the 2020 Census. The provision would likewise undermine coverage in the ACS and the Current Population Survey, which require more than 3 and approximately 2.5 follow-up contacts, respectively. Major business, economic, and demographic surveys that have multiple follow up contact strategies would likewise be adversely impacted. Given the havoc this provision would have on all of the Bureau's surveys, we urge removal of this provision in the final version of the FY 2025 CJS appropriations measure.

Thank you for considering our views as you negotiate the final FY 2025 CJS appropriations bill.
Sincerely,

cc The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
 The Honorable Jerry Moran
 The Honorable Hal Rogers
 The Honorable Matt Cartwright

National

Academic Pediatric Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Anthropological Association
American Educational Research Association
American Federation of State County and Municipal
 Employees
American Pediatric Society
American Statistical Association
APIAHF
Arab American Institute (AAI)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
Associated General Contractors of America
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users
Center for Puerto Rican Studies
Claritas

Coalition on Human Needs
Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
(COPAFS)
Decision Demographics, LLC
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Evolving Space
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Equality
Fayetteville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority,
Inc.
First Focus Campaign for Children
Gerontological Society of America
Government Information Watch
Hindu American Foundation
ICSC
Impact Fund
Insights Association
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of Women Voters of the United States
Movement Advancement Project
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association for Business Economics
National Association of Counties
National Association of REALTORS
National Association of Regional Councils
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Community Development Association
National Education Association
National League of Cities
National Urban League
Nielsen
Partnership for America's Children
Pediatric Policy Council
Population Association of America
Prison Policy Initiative
Project on Government Oversight
Robert W. Deutsch Foundation
Save the Children
SocialExplorer, Inc.
Society for Pediatric Research
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Union for Reform Judaism

University of Connecticut, Puerto Rican Studies Initiative
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association
ZERO TO THREE

State-Level

A New Hope Consulting		OR
Asian Texans for Justice		TX
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network		CA
Colorado Civic Engagement Roundtable		CO
Delaware Community Foundation		DE
Equality California		CA
Housing Action Illinois		IL
Indivisible Hawaii		HI
MACS 2030 - Minnesotans for the ACS and 2030 Census		MN
Maine Children's Alliance		ME
Michigan Nonprofit Association		MI
Minnesota Council on Foundations		MN
N.Y. Elections, Census & Redistricting Institute		NY
NC Counts Coalition		NC
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy		OK
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children		PA
Public Justice Center		MD
Silver State Equality		NV
The Bingham Program		ME
The Georgia Coalition for the Peoples Agenda		GA
UCF Puerto Rico Research Hub		FL

Local/City/Regional

AltaMed Health Services	Los Angeles	CA
Center for Urban Research, CUNY Graduate Center	New York	NY
Dreams United/Suenos Unidos, Inc.	Long Prairie	MN
Essex Passaic Wellness Coalition - New Jersey	Newark	NJ
The Data Center of Southeast Louisiana	New Orleans	LA
The Minneapolis Foundation	Minneapolis	MN
Twin Cities Research Group	Minneapolis-St. Paul	MN