



November 7, 2007

Dear Senator Mikulski, Senator Shelby, Representative Mollohan and Representative Frelinghuysen,

We are writing to you as members of the Census Project, a collaboration of state and local governments, civil rights and labor groups, housing and child advocates, businesses, and research organizations interested in a fair and accurate Census 2010. As you reconcile the final version of H.R. 3093, the Fiscal Year 2008 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill, we want you to be aware of our support for fully funding the Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau is the premiere source of demographic and economic data on every facet of our nation's population and communities. The agency produces annual data that are used by federal agencies to determine the allocation of over \$300 billion in federal funding (2007, Brookings Institution) and by the private sector to inform key investment and other business decisions. Further, census population numbers are used to apportion seats in Congress, influencing the foundation of our democracy. To enable the Census Bureau to perform its essential operations and constitutional requirements, we ask the conferees to adopt the following recommendations:

Provide \$1.266 billion in Fiscal Year 2008

We urge the conferees to agree to the Senate mark on the agency's Salaries and Expenses account, to the House mark on the 2010 Decennial Census Program, and to the Senate mark on all other programs, including the Economic Census, Census of Governments, Intercensal Demographic Estimates Program, Geographic Programs and Data Processing Systems. Doing so would require a total funding level of \$1.266 billion, a 2.91% increase over the President's request.

Provide \$13 million for Partnership Program

The above recommendation includes \$13 million for the Partnership Program, which was funded in the House bill, but did not appear in the President's budget request. Just as the Bureau must "ramp up" its technical systems to ensure an accurate, fair Census, it must also begin educating the public, especially in historically undercounted communities, about the importance of participating in the census. The Partnership Program engages trusted leaders and organizations, from the national to neighborhood level,

to help improve the census count among people of color, children, and those who speak a language other than English. If the Bureau doesn't receive funding for the program in Fiscal Year 2008, the success of the Partnership Program is jeopardized and valuable time is lost organizing over 140,000 local governments, businesses, community groups, churches and non-profit organizations nationwide.

Strike Internet response and ACS Methods Panel provisions

We ask the conferees to strike language adopted by the Senate that would withhold \$10 million from the Census until it reports on plans to make an Internet response option available in the 2010 Census and American Community Survey (ACS). Census Bureau officials and outside experts state that testing the Internet response on the Census has not demonstrated cost savings or increased response rates—particularly among the hardest-to-count population groups. Given the uncertain status of census preparations under the Continuing Resolution, the Bureau does not have sufficient time to plan, test, and execute this option on the 2010 design.

We also ask the conferees to strike language in the Senate report that would restrict funding for the ACS Methods Panel. The agency must be allowed to spend money on the panel if it is to properly test and demonstrate the efficacy of future questions on the ACS.

Thank you for your attention to these issues and for your support of the Census Bureau and its valuable programs.

Sincerely,

American Sociological Association

Helen Samhan
Arab American Institute Foundation

Asian American Justice Center

Association of Population Centers

City of Los Angeles

City of New York

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Edward J. Spar, Executive Director
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Linda Loubert, Ph.D., Political Economist, Research Associate
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National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)
Educational Fund

National Association of Towns and Townships

Population Association of America

Population Resource Center

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