

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2015

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Fattah:

We write to express our strong support for the Administration's Fiscal Year 2016 funding request of \$1.5 billion for the U.S. Census Bureau. We urge your subcommittee to fully fund the request of \$663 million for 2020 Census planning and \$257 million for the related American Community Survey.

Congress directed the Census Bureau to keep the cost of the 2020 census equal to or less than the cost of the 2010 census. In order to achieve that goal, the Census Bureau is exploring significant reforms to the census process that would reduce costs and improve accuracy. Developing these new initiatives requires sufficient planning funds. The Bureau is conducting research and operational development on new data collection technology that could save more than \$5 billion over the lifecycle cost of the census. Failure to invest in planning and preparation could leave the Census Bureau with no choice but to use traditional counting methods that are expensive and less accurate. Unfortunately, preparations have already been delayed due to budget shortfalls.

This year the Census Bureau will announce the design framework for the 2020 Census. Design selection and several key field tests for 2015 are behind schedule due to previous budget cuts. Therefore, the Census Bureau must pivot quickly in FY2016 to develop the systems and operational infrastructure necessary to execute the census with confidence and minimized risk. Time is of the essence, the Bureau must complete production within the next two years to prepare for readiness tests.

Beyond preparing for the census, the Bureau is charged with the important task of managing the American Community Survey (ACS) each year. The importance of the ACS cannot be understated; it provides Congress, state and local governments, businesses, and social service providers with the objective, reliable data they need to invest wisely, stimulate economic growth, and meet the needs of vulnerable populations like veterans, people with disabilities, older Americans, and low income households.

In 2005 Congress supported development of the ACS as a replacement for the decennial census long form. Today the ACS is the only source of annually updated demographic, social, and economic data for every community in the nation. The modest funding increase requested for the ACS will support continued efforts to improve the experience of respondents and ensure data quality. Cuts to the ACS budget could mean many U.S. counties and all rural and small communities go uncounted, leaving these areas without sufficient data to guide planning decisions, resource allocation, and initiatives to attract new business investment. Our most vulnerable communities cannot afford cuts to the ACS.

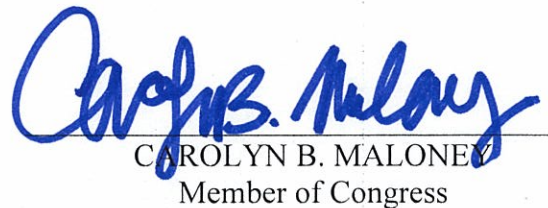
The decennial census is the nation's largest peacetime activity and foundation of our representative system of governance, from Congress down to local school boards. Congress itself relies on census and ACS data to allocate, prudently and fairly, most federal discretionary funding to the communities we represent so proudly. The census must be a budget priority for Congress. We cannot continue to shortchange an activity so fundamental to our democracy and the sustained well-being of our communities.

Thank you for considering our views on the Census Bureau's FY2016 budget. We appreciate the challenges your committee faces and look forward to working with you to craft a FY2016 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill that supports the Census Bureau's vital activities.

Sincerely,



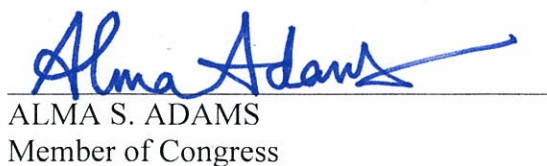
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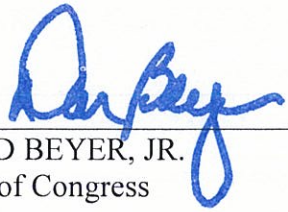
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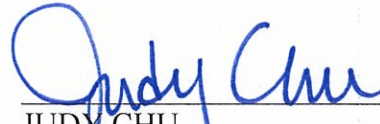
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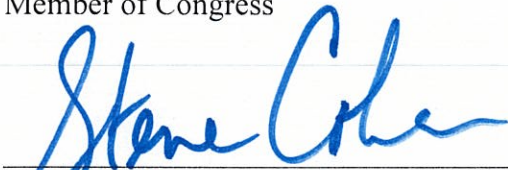
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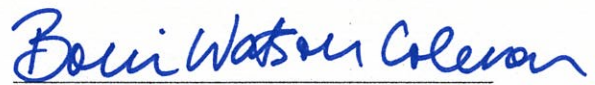
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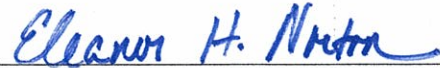
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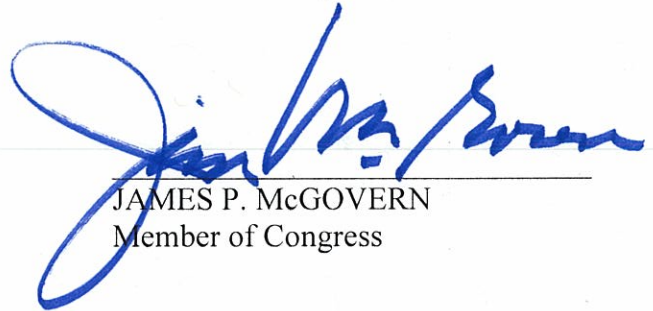
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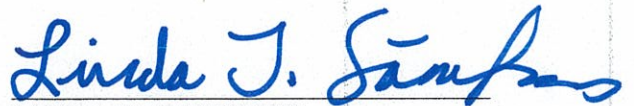
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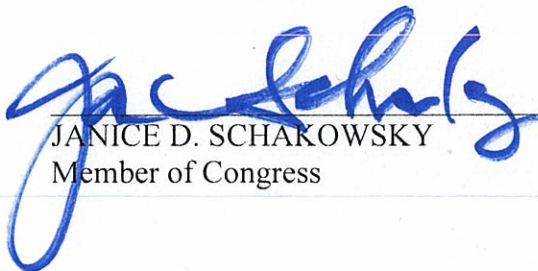
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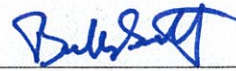
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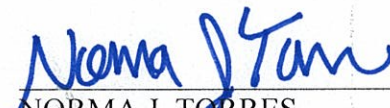
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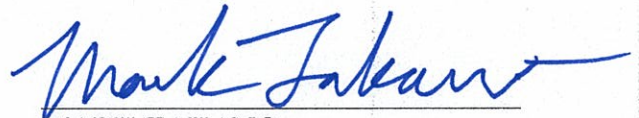
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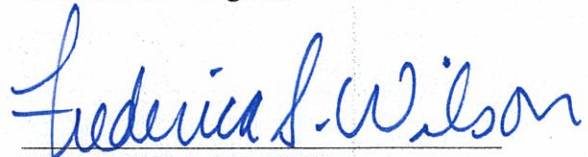
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