

# United States Senate

June 21, 2021

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shaheen and Ranking Member Moran:

As you consider fiscal year (FY) 2022 appropriations, we write respectfully to request your support for \$2 billion in funding for the Census Bureau, which represents a \$335 million increase over the agency's FY 2021 total funding level of \$1.65 billion.

The Census Bureau is at an important crossroads. The agency is still resolving the outcome of the 2020 Census, while simultaneously pursuing groundbreaking technical innovations and preparing for the 2030 Census. In FY 2022, Congress has a unique opportunity to initiate multi-year funding for the Bureau, providing the agency with resources that it needs not only to sustain and strengthen its mission, but also to recover from years of postponed enhancements and pursue numerous necessary operational improvements.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc on the completion of the 2020 Census. Operations necessary to produce and disseminate the apportionment counts, redistricting data products, and downstream detailed census files have shifted to later in the decennial census's funding cycle than is typical. The Census Bureau has already acknowledged that delays in the release of apportionment and redistricting data are forcing the agency to postpone the delivery of subsequent 2020 Census data products, including the Demographic Profile, Demographic & Housing Characteristics File, Congressional District Demographic and Housing Characteristics File, and Population and Housing Tables, into FY 2022. The delay of these 2020 Census products means the Census Bureau will very likely need additional funding in FY 2022 to complete all operations and data delivery associated with completing all related 2020 Census operations.

In addition to requiring additional funding to meet its constitutionally mandated decennial census mission, the Census Bureau will need enhanced resources to pursue other initiatives, including:

- **High Frequency Data Program**—The Bureau's "Pulse Surveys" have provided timely data regarding the economic, social, and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on U.S. communities and businesses. These surveys have attracted support from other federal agencies that have collaborated with the Census Bureau to produce the Small

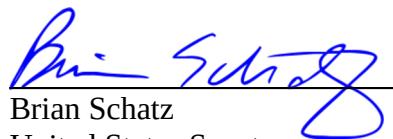
Business and Household Pulse Survey. The Census Bureau will require no less than \$10 million in FY 2022 to sustain and expand this innovation that provides much more timely data on current economic and social issues as our country continues to recover from the pandemic.

- **Modernizing the Bureau’s data infrastructure**—The Census Bureau should harness currently available “Big Data” technologies and methodologies to reduce respondent burden and realign the agency’s already-existing data from multiple sources into universal “frames.” A significant increase in funding for the Census Frames initiative, which was only funded at about \$12.7 million in FY 2021, will allow the Census Bureau to reduce duplication, increase ease and usability of federal statistical data, enhance the quality of Bureau products, facilitate analysis of the U.S. population and economy, and ensure that the federal government can utilize administrative data to maximum advantage before burdening survey respondents
- **Enhancing the American Community Survey (ACS)**—The Census Bureau needs the flexibility to combine data sources with the ACS—the ongoing survey that replaced the “long form” of the Census in 2005—which provides consistent, timely, and accurate data about the nation’s changing socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Combining data sources will allow the agency to produce more timely granular data for a significant number of geographies and sub-populations than achievable from the current ACS 5-year estimates. ACS data are an invaluable resource that data users, state and local governments, planners, and businesses rely on throughout the decade to make key investment and policy decisions as well as to conduct research and evaluate programs. The Census Bureau also needs to continue to use the ACS “as a testbed for innovative survey and data processing techniques,” as Congress directed in FY 2021. Funding for the ACS has remained relatively stagnant in recent years, including a little over \$226 million in FY 2021. The Bureau will require additional funding (no less than \$45 million to increase the sample size by at least 1 million households) to properly plan and execute an expansion of the ACS, beginning in FY 2022.
- **Stabilizing and increasing funding for Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)**—After multiple COVID-19 relief bills, policymakers need to understand how the individual provisions in these supplemental appropriations measures assisted (or failed to assist) families and communities. The SIPP is designed to achieve that goal, yet its funding has fluctuated routinely, especially during years in which the government has been funded via a series of continuing resolutions. Stabilizing and increasing support for SIPP, to no less than \$48 million in FY 2022, will help Congress make evidence-based policy decisions on the effectiveness of government assistance programs.
- **Launching the Economic Census**—The Economic Census of 2022 is rapidly approaching and may be even more vital than normal as the nation seeks to understand and recover from the current economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The decade’s “Year 2” usually brings increased spending on the Economic Census. For example, in FY 2012, the Bureau proposed spending an additional \$12.6 million (an 11 percent increase over FY 2011) to support that phase of the 2012 Economic Census.

Similarly, increased spending for the 2022 Economic Census will be necessary in FY 2022.

The Census Bureau faces many challenges and opportunities during this upcoming fiscal year, and Congress has the opportunity to provide robust assistance in the agency's efforts. We thank you for your continued support of the Census Bureau.

Sincerely,



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



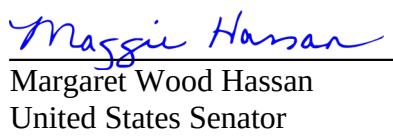
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



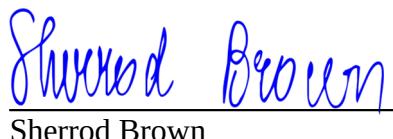
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



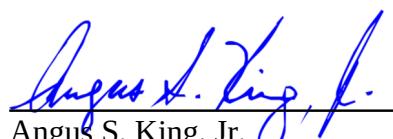
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



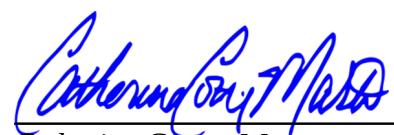
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
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Angus S. King, Jr.  
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Catherine Cortez Masto  
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Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar  
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Bob Casey

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
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Maria Cantwell

Maria Cantwell  
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Bernard Sanders

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Christopher A. Coons

Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator