

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 14, 2026

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
Science, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Moran and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

As you develop the fiscal year (FY) 2027 appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you prioritize funding for the U.S. Census Bureau by providing the agency with \$2.1 billion.

2030 Census

The decennial census is the nation's largest civilian peacetime mobilization, determining not only apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives (and state and local redistricting), but also the allocation of approximately \$1.5 trillion in annual federal funding. FY 2027 is a crucial year in the decade-long ramp-up to the 2030 Census in which preparations and costs continue to exponentially increase.

As learned in the run up to the 2020 Census, short-changing funding at this point in the planning process introduces greater risk to a successful outcome. When the Administration's request for the 2020 Census planning in Fiscal Years 2012-2017 was not met, 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. Adequate support for decennial census preparations now will reduce the risk of requiring unplanned, additional funding and improve the agency's ability to conduct an inclusive, accurate, and cost-efficient count in 2030.

American Community Survey (ACS)

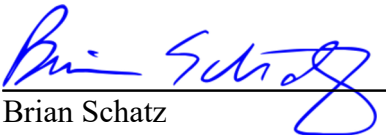
In addition to fulfilling its Constitutional mandate to prepare for the next decennial census, the Bureau needs robust funding to sustain and enhance another facet of the decennial program, the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS, which replaced the decennial census long form in 2005, during the Bush Administration, is a nationwide, continuous survey of about 3.5 million

households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It is the only source of comparable (across geography), consistent (across time), timely (updated annually) and high-quality demographic, socio-economic, and housing data for all U.S. communities down to the neighborhood and census tract levels, making it possible to accurately compare downtown New York with rural Kentucky. Data users in the private, public, and non-profit sectors use ACS data to determine where and how to locate businesses and factories, build schools, hospitals, and roads, and target services to vulnerable populations, such as children, veterans, and older Americans. Scientists and market researchers use it to produce statistically representative samples for surveys and opinion polls. Further, ACS data are used to enforce civil rights laws and protect people from discrimination.

Underinvestment has degraded ACS data, precluded necessary increases in the survey's sample size and shortchanged the Bureau's ability to address steadily declining response rates, revise content, accelerate research to reduce respondent burden, and make other improvements that stakeholders have recommended. To restore and enhance the ACS, we support \$100 to \$300 million as part of the FY 2027 funding recommendation.

Once again, we encourage your subcommittee to make the Census Bureau a high priority and to recommend the agency receive \$2.1 billion in FY 2027.

Sincerely,



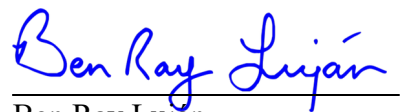
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



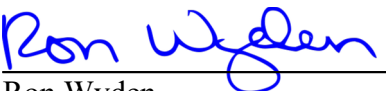
Tina Smith
United States Senator



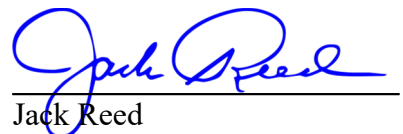
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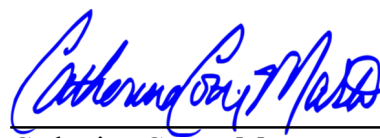
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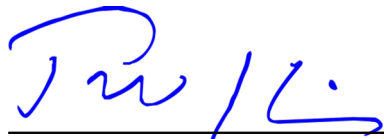
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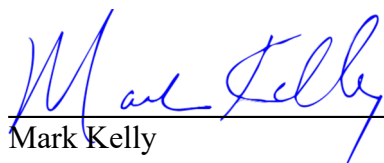
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