

POPULATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
ACTION ALERT: CONTACT CONGRESS NOW

OPPOSE CUTS TO U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

On July 13, 2011, the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee approved H.R. 2596, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act, which funds a number of federal agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau. The bill proposes cutting the Census Bureau 25% BELOW the agency's FY 2011 funding level, putting vital data collection programs in jeopardy and crippling the agency's ability to achieve significant savings in the future through innovative methods and greater use of technology. Specifically, the Census Bureau, if this funding level becomes law, is likely to cancel the 2012 Economic Census, a cornerstone of the nation's economic measurements and source of data for the Gross Domestic Product and national income accounts.

During the first week of August, the U.S. House is expected to debate and vote on H.R. 2596. We urge you to contact your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators with the below message:

As your constituent and a consumer of data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, I am writing to express my opposition to the extreme funding cuts proposed in H.R. 2596, the Fiscal Year 2012 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill. The bill provides the Census Bureau with \$855.4 million, which is 25 percent below the Census Bureau's FY 2011 spending level. I understand if the Census Bureau is forced to accept this funding level, it will have no choice but to eliminate core statistical programs-most notably, the 2012 Economic Census, a cornerstone of the nation's economic measurements and source of data for the Gross Domestic Product and national income accounts. Abandoning plans for this important assessment of economic activity across diverse job and manufacturing sectors would be foolhardy at a time when data are an essential component of the roadmap to economic recovery and progress and job creation.

As a social scientist and member of the Population Association of America, I rely on census data to facilitate my research on _____. [Insert own example of how you use census data in your research and/or teaching activities]

I appreciate the difficult decisions Congress must make to address the nation's current fiscal predicament. The Census Bureau clearly appreciates the dilemma facing Congress, having already proposed cuts in its FY 2012

budget and significant streamlining of operations through administrative actions. Additional cuts will be counterproductive to an agency whose data are essential to running our government, informing our policies, and influencing economic productivity. I urge you to restore funding for the Census Bureau as proposed by the Administration in its FY 2012 budget and to reject any attempts to cut the agency's budget further when the bill is considered by the full House and Senate.

To find your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senator, go to:

U.S. House of Representatives

<http://www.house.gov/>

U.S. Senate

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter!

Mary Jo Hoeksema and Juliane Baron

Office of Government Affairs

Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers

THE CENSUS PROJECT

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Key House Committee Poised to Cut Census Bureau Budget By 25%; 2012 Economic Census, 2020 Census Planning in Danger of Elimination

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. House Appropriations Committee could act as early as tomorrow to slash the Census Bureau budget by 25 percent below FY 2011 spending levels. The reduction - \$169 million below the President's request for FY2012 and \$295 million below the FY2011 allocation - would likely force the Bureau to make one of two stark choices: eliminate the 2012 Economic Census (conducted every five years), or abandon all or most early research and planning for the 2020 Census, as well as some important final 2010 decennial census activities. The final Census 2010 activities that might be cut include a program, called Count Question Resolution, for local government officials to challenge their 2010 population counts, as well as the Census Coverage Measurement process, which produces scientific estimates of the undercount and overcount in the last census. Cities of all sizes that have filed challenges or are considering doing so include New York, Houston, St. Louis, Atlanta, Jersey City, San Jose, CA, and Tyler, TX.

"The subcommittee mark for the Census Bureau will likely compel the agency to cut core programs. The cut of \$169 million from the President's request for Periodic Censuses and Programs puts in doubt the Census Bureau's ability to conduct the 2012 Quinquennial Economic Census, required by the Census Act," declared a [letter](#) signed by 38 organizations and delivered to the House Appropriations Committee. "The Economic Census is the cornerstone of the nation's economic statistics programs, providing core information on virtually all non-farm businesses and related data on business expenditures, commodity flows, and minority and women-owned businesses. It is a fundamental building block of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and national income and product accounts. Fiscal Year 2012 is the third year of the six-year 2012 Economic Census funding cycle. Abandoning plans for this important measurement of economic activity across diverse sectors would be foolhardy at a time when data are an essential component of the roadmap to economic recovery and progress and job creation."

Alternatively, the Census Bureau might be forced to discontinue early research and planning for the 2020 Census, thereby foregoing opportunities to develop new methods that will yield significant cost savings for the next decennial enumeration. "For example, continuous updating of the Master Address File throughout the decade - a proposed new initiative - would save hundreds of millions of dollars alone by eliminating the need for comprehensive pre-census address canvassing in 2019," the stakeholder organizations, representing a wide range of economic and social sectors, wrote to lawmakers.

Other core programs potentially affected include the American Community Survey (ACS), the seminal source of annual socio-economic and demographic data about the nation used by

decision-makers in the private sector and at all levels of government to allocate limited resources. For FY 2012, the Bureau requested \$5 million to test innovations in the American Community Survey, such as an Internet response option, that will contribute substantially to controlling future decennial census costs.

"We believe the Subcommittee's recommendation of \$856 million, which is 25 percent below the Census Bureau's FY 2011 spending level, puts vital data collection programs in jeopardy and will cripple the agency's ability to achieve significant savings in the future through innovative methods and greater use of technology," said the letter.

The Obama Administration's original budget request of \$1.025 billion was already a substantial reduction from the previous year. Further, the bureau just announced that it was permanently closing six of its 12 regional offices, reducing costs by an estimated \$15 to \$18 million per year, beginning in 2014.

The letter was signed by 38 organizations, including:

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Statistical Association

Association of Public Data Users

Japanese American Citizens League

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Moving Forward Gulf Coast Inc.

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

National Education Association

Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA)

Population Association of America

A full copy of the congressional letter is posted online at:

http://www.thecensusproject.org/letters/HouseCJS_GroupSignOn.pdf.

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