Testimony on behalf of the

Population Association of America/ Association of Population Centers

Regarding the Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations for the

Census Bureau

and

National Science Foundation

Submitted to the

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Alan Mollohan, Chair
The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member

Submitted by
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Introduction
Thank you, Chairman Mollohan, Ranking Member Frelinghuysen and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, for this opportunity to express support for the Census Bureau and the National Science Foundation (NSF), two agencies important to the Population Association of America and the Association of Population Centers (PAA/APC). **PAA and APC request that you support the administration’s budget for the Census Bureau at $2.6 billion and for NSF at $6.8 billion.**

Background on the PAA/APC and Demographic Research
The PAA is an interdisciplinary, scientific organization comprised of over 3,000 research professionals, including demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians. The APC is a similar organization comprised of over 30 universities and research groups that foster collaborative demographic research and data sharing, translate basic population research for policy makers, and provide educational and training opportunities in population studies.

Demography is the study of populations and how and why they change. Demographers, as well as other population researchers, collect and analyze data on trends in births, deaths, immigration and disabilities as well as racial, ethnic and socioeconomic changes in populations. Among the major policy issues, population researchers study the demographic causes and consequences of population aging, trends in fertility, marriage, divorce and their effects on the health and well being of children, and immigration and migration and how these patterns affect the ethnic and cultural diversity of our population and the nation’s health and environment.

PAA/APC members rely on a number of federal agencies charged with funding demographic research and generating reliable, accessible data. The ability of our members to produce meaningful research, often used to inform policy decisions, requires the use of substantial data sets and support for research projects and research training. Both the Census Bureau and National Science Foundation (NSF), which are under your subcommittee’s jurisdiction, are key to the success of our field.

The Census Bureau
The Census Bureau is the most comprehensive source of demographic and economic data on every facet of our nation’s population and communities. PAA and APC members rely on accessible data produced by the Census Bureau to conduct their research. **Thus, we support the Administration’s request of $2.6 billion for the Census Bureau in FY 2009 and hope the Subcommittee will as well.** This funding is necessary to support the significant ramp-up activities in the final preparation year for the 2010 decennial census and to support the agency’s ongoing survey operations, too.

We recognize the FY2009 request is double the FY 2008 appropriation of $1.3 billion. However, as you know, the Census Bureau’s budget is cyclical and must increase...
dramatically in the years immediately preceding the decennial census to pay for necessary preparations. In FY 2009, these activities include:

- Opening and staffing 150 “early” local census offices;
- Canvassing all neighborhoods and rural areas to verify addresses (on the Master Address File) and geographic locations (in the TIGER system);
- Finalizing data capture, data processing, and telecommunications systems;
- Printing hundreds of millions of census questionnaires and other forms; and,
- Conducting promotional activities, including the Regional Partnership Program, to assure the greatest possible level of participation in 2010.

The groundwork done in the final year before the census will, to a large extent, determine the success of the 2010 Census. The Census Bureau must receive, at a minimum, the President’s requested funding level, to ensure vital preparations are thorough and timely.

Fiscal Year 2009 is also a pivotal year for the American Community Survey (ACS), which has replaced the traditional census long form. In 2010, the ACS will provide the first demographic, economic, and housing characteristics data for areas as small as census tracts and block groups, based on five years worth of data collection for households (2005 – 2009). To assure the data collected in the last year are as accurate as in previous years, the Census Bureau needs sufficient funding to continue sampling three million households that receive the ACS annually.

The Administration’s request also will enable the agency to continue its other ongoing surveys, which measure changes in individual and household demographic and economic conditions. For example, in FY 2009, the Census Bureau will tabulate and publish data from the 2007 Economic Census, launch an initiative to improve the collection of economic statistics on the growing service sector, and continue the Survey of Income and Program Participation. Continuation of these activities is particularly important in the current difficult economic climate, as these data provide a basis for key economic indicators and help Congress assess the prudence of fiscal policy proposals.

National Science Foundation (NSF)
PAA and APC, as members of the Coalition for National Science Funding, support the President’s Fiscal Year 2009 budget request for NSF of $6.8 billion. This budget will enable the NSF Social, Behavioral and Economic Science Directorate (SBE) to continue its support of social science surveys and a rich portfolio of population research projects.

The mission of NSF is to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense. The demography of our
population directly impacts the health, prosperity, welfare, and security of our nation. NSF’s support of demographic research, particularly its support of large-scale longitudinal surveys, such as the General Social Survey and Panel Study of Income Dynamics, is central to the agency’s mission and essential for the field of demographic research. NSF is the funding source for approximately 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America’s colleges and universities, including basic behavioral and social research. Demographic research also depends on support from NSF for support of individual research projects and research centers.

The Census Bureau and the National Science Foundation support, indirectly and directly, the collection and availability of rich data sources important to PAA/APC members. Our demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians rely on federally supported data to conduct sound research and inform public policy. Investments in these data sets are investments in good policy.

Thank you for considering our requests and for supporting federal programs that benefit the field of demographic research.