Statement on House Vote to Eliminate the American Community Survey
May 2012

On May 10, 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 5326, the Fiscal Year 2013 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act, a bill that provides funding for a number of federal agencies, including the Census Bureau and National Science Foundation.

During debate on the House floor, Congressman Daniel Webster (R-FL) offered an amendment to H.R.5326 to eliminate the American Community Survey (ACS). The amendment passed by a vote of 232-190.

In response to this vote, the Census Project coalition, which the Population Association of America (PAA) and Association of Population Centers (APC) belong to, drafted a sign-on letter to the leaders of the United States Senate, urging them to support the Census Bureau and American Community Survey when that chamber considers its version of the Fiscal Year 2013 Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill later this month. The letter was signed by almost 600 national, state, and local organizations, including the PAA, APC, and many individual population research centers and universities.

The final letter is posted at:
http://www.thecensusproject.org/letters/2012-05-18_Senate_Census_Budget_Ltr-SenateAppropriations-Final-Signed.pdf

The ACS, which replaced the decennial census long form nationwide in 2005, is an invaluable source of information about the U.S. population. In fact, it is the ONLY source of representative, timely, and objective information about the nation’s social, economic, and demographic characteristics down to the neighborhood level. Thousands of ACS data users, including American businesses, state and local governments, researchers, and educators, rely on this survey to make critical decisions, including where to locate factories and markets, build roads, schools, and community centers, and direct services to children, the elderly and veterans. Without the ACS, leaders in the public and private sectors alike will not have the basic information they need to make consequential decisions, affecting millions of Americans.

The PAA and APC are committed to working with other organizations and their members to support the Census Bureau and the continuation of the American Community Survey.