September 4, 2014

Senator Jay Rockefeller
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Senator Rockefeller:

On behalf of the over 3,000 population scientists who are members of the Population Association of America (PAA) and the almost 40 population research centers nationwide comprising the Association of Population Centers (APC), we want to thank you and your colleagues on the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee for introducing the American COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2014 (S.2757).

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is a very important Federal agency to PAA and APC members, who are primarily demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians, and population research centers based at public and private academic institutions nationwide. Our members produce original scientific research using data from NSF-funded databases such as Panel Study on Income Dynamics, General Social Survey and Luxembourg Income Study. Our members also compete for funds awarded by the NSF to conduct this research, produce data and important scientific findings, and train the next generation of population scientists.

The America COMPETES Act 2014 demonstrates that investment in basic research is a national priority and is consistent with the American Association for Advancing Sciences (AAAS) Guiding Principles for NSF reauthorization supported by the broad science, business and higher education communities. PAA and APC were two of the numerous scientific agencies that signed the Guiding Principles document.

Our organizations are particularly grateful that your bill articulates the value of and support for basic research and specifically recognizes the value of the social and behavioral sciences. Furthermore, we are pleased the bill protects the integrity of the NSF merit review process.

Once again, we thank you for introducing the America COMPETES Act 2014 and providing the vision necessary to propel scientific progress in the United States and around the globe.

Best Regards,

Robert Moffit                                             Lisa Berkman
2014 PAA President                                      2014-2016 APC President