October 20, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Speaker, Leaders, Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the over 3,000 members of the Population Association of America (PAA), and over 40 population research centers comprising the Association of Population Centers (APC) nationwide, we thank you for supporting federal agencies that fund the population sciences and ask for your support as the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 appropriations package is crafted.

The PAA and APC are comprised of thousands of behavioral and social scientists, including demographers, economists, sociologists and statisticians, studying the implications of population change. Their diverse set of research interests include, marriage and divorce, aging, immigration and migration, population forecasting, poverty, mortality, disability, and adolescent health. Given this wide range of expertise, our members rely on direct and indirect funding from an equally diverse set of federal agencies. Our primary agencies of interest are the: National Center for Health Statistics, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development, and U.S. Census Bureau.

With support from these agencies, our members are contributing important research advances to improve the health and socio-economic well being of individuals and society. Some recent, novel advances include:

- In geographic areas matched on socioeconomic and other salient characteristics, areas with high levels of air pollution have higher levels of infant mortality (Chay and Greenstone, 2003).
- Low income in childhood (prenatal to age 5) significantly affects future earnings, work hours, and whether or not one becomes a food stamp recipient (Duncan, 2010).
Disability among older Americans declined 25% between 1982 and 2001 (Manton et al., 2006).
Smoking affects how life expectancy is forecasted for men and women. (Preston, 2006).
Family stability and parental involvement affect the long-term health and development of children. For example, children born to two married, biological parents are less likely to be diagnosed with asthma (Harknett, 2009).

As you know, none of the FY 2011 appropriations bills funding have been enacted. When Congress reconvenes in November to reconcile an omnibus appropriations bill, or a series of smaller omnibus bills, we recommend the following funding levels for our primary federal agencies of interest:

- National Institutes of Health $32 billion
- U.S. Census Bureau $1.3 billion
- National Center for Health Statistics $162 million
- National Science Foundation $7.4 billion
- US Agency for International Development Reproductive Health/Family Planning $735 million

The House or Senate Appropriations Committees have approved all of these funding levels with the exception of the U.S. Census Bureau (which received slightly less than the amount requested by the Administration ($1.3 billion).

On a related note, we urge Congress NOT to enact a long-term continuing resolution (CR) and flat fund most federal agencies through FY 2011. If a long-term CR is adopted, our federal agencies of interest will be forced to curtail, delay or cancel many important initiatives, including:

- Collecting 12 months of birth and death data from vital records jurisdictions and supporting states and territories in adopting the 2003 standard birth certificate, implementing Web-based electronic birth records, and phasing in electronic death records;
- Expanding the sample size of the American Community Survey, the definitive, annual survey the Census Bureau uses to collect socio-economic and other demographic data about the U.S. population;
- Sustaining current success rates at NIH Institutes and Centers; and,
- Expanding the Health and Retirement Study to further understanding about the financial, work, and health care decisions of older Americans.

Thank you for your consideration of our views as you conclude the FY 2011 appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Mare    James R. Walker
President     President
Population Association of America Association of Population Centers