May 27, 2014

Dear Representative,

As you know, during the week of May 27, the U.S. House of Representatives will be considering H.R. 4660, the Fiscal Year 2015 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill. This bill is very important to 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), because it funds the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Census Bureau. PAA members, who are primarily demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians, and population research centers depend on data that the Census Bureau produces to analyze demographic and socioeconomic trends in the U.S. They also compete for funds awarded by the NSF to conduct research, produce data and important scientific findings, and train the next generation of population scientists. Further, PAA members and APC centers rely on NSF-funded databases to produce original scientific research.

During consideration of H.R. 4660, I urge you to vote NO on any amendments that may be offered during floor debate that would do any of the following:

1. Use the Census Bureau or NSF as an offset to fund other programs in the bill.
2. Propose cuts to specific disciplines, especially social and behavioral sciences.
3. Make participation in the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey voluntary.

PAA and APC will treat any votes on these matters as key votes.

The Census Project coalition has prepared two important fact sheets/talking points memos on the proposed cutbacks in Census 2020 planning incorporated in the bill, as well as a fact sheet/talking points memo on a possible floor amendment to make participation in the American Community Survey (ACS) voluntary. All three pieces are available at: http://www.thecensusproject.org/factsheets.htm. The Coalition for National Science Funding has posted a statement supporting the bill’s NSF mark and opposing any possible offsetting amendments.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter. For additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the PAA Office of Government and Public Affairs at paaapc@crosslink.net.

Best Regards,

Robert Moffitt
2014 PAA President

Lisa Berkman
2014-2016 APC President