

Population Association of America Association of Population Centers

Office of Government and Public Affairs

8630 Fenton Street, Suite 722 • Silver Spring, MD 20910
www.populationassociation.org • www.popcenters.org • 301-565-6710 x 1006



May 26, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

On behalf of the over 3,000 behavioral and social scientists who belong to the Population Association of America (www.populationassociation.org) and almost 40 federally-supported population research centers nationwide comprising the Association of Population Centers (www.popcenters.org), we are writing to urge a timely appointment of a highly qualified director of the U.S. Census Bureau.

As you know, the current director, Mr. John Thompson, resigned recently and will be leaving his position on June 30. With Census 2020 only three years away, it is imperative that the Bureau have a highly qualified and respected director in place as soon as possible. Preparations for Census 2020 are well underway, with less than one year before a critical “dress rehearsal” in three areas of the United States. Key innovations will undergo final testing, thus allowing the Census Bureau to achieve its goal, mandated by Congress, of reducing costs while preserving accuracy of the census. Failure to fill this vacancy quickly could jeopardize the success of this 2018 End-to-End Readiness Test, delay final design decisions, and impair preparations for the 2020 Census. The Census Director also must oversee efforts to strengthen and streamline the American Community Survey (ACS), which updates the census throughout the decade, and is the only source of comparable, consistent, and timely demographic and socio-economic data for all U.S. communities. Simply put, the need for strong, decisive leadership at the Census Bureau, particularly at this juncture, cannot be overstated.

The Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act of 2011 requires that the Census Bureau Director have “demonstrated ability in managing large organizations and experience in the collection, analysis, and use of statistical data.” Our members rely on data disseminated by the Census Bureau to conduct their research in public, private, and academic settings. We feel strongly that in addition to meeting the legal criteria the position requires, the next Census Bureau Director should have stature in the statistical research

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community and an ability to work effectively with Congress, the Administration, and a diverse range of census stakeholders.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for considering our views. We are happy to serve as a resource to the Administration as you consider candidates to serve as the next U.S. Census Bureau Director.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Amy Ong Tsui in black ink.

Dr. Amy Ong Tsui, President
Population Association of America

Handwritten signature of Steve Ruggles in black ink.

Dr. Steve Ruggles, President
Association of Population Centers

cc: The Honorable Wilbur Ross
The Honorable Ron Johnson
The Honorable Claire McCaskill