



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION
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732 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1943

(703) 684-1221 ■ www.amstat.org ■ asainfo@amstat.org

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POPULATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

September 22, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
US Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross,

Our organizations represent thousands of scientists and data users in the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors who rely on data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct a wide range of research, survey, and planning activities. Our members share a common need for access to accurate, timely data about the nation's changing socio-economic and demographic characteristics that only the U.S. Census Bureau can provide through its conduct of the decennial census. Therefore, ensuring the integrity of decennial data and supporting an independent Census Bureau are major priorities for our organizations.

In this vein, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the recent addition of three new political appointees serving senior positions within the office of the Census Bureau Director. The Department has not made it clear to stakeholders why these new positions were necessary, nor, has the Department made it clear how the qualifications of these individuals benefit Census at such senior positions. Given the current environment, we are extremely concerned about how this might impact the ability of the Bureau's staff to accomplish its mission of achieving a complete count of U.S. households.

Given that the self-response phase of the 2020 Census is almost complete and years of careful plans are being executed, the creation of these new high-level political positions generates concerns among stakeholders about the potential to undermine a fair and accurate enumeration. Further, the addition of new decision makers at this late stage is likely to disrupt the efforts of the highly competent career Census staff in executing their time-sensitive duties as well as raise concerns among the public about potentially improper outside influence.

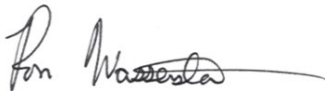
We urge you to consider the impact these appointees may be having on the agency, career staff, and, most importantly, the conduct of the 2020 Census at this critical point in the operations. We respectfully ask you to eliminate these positions immediately. Our organizations welcome the opportunity to share our concerns with you and your staff in greater detail.

Thank you for considering our views regarding this urgent matter.

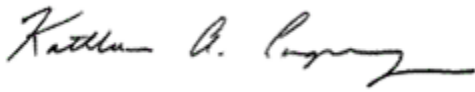
Sincerely,



Eileen M. Crimmins
President, Population Association of America



Ron Wasserstein
Executive Director, American Statistical Association



Kathleen A. Cagney
President, Association of Population Centers

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
The Honorable Gary Peters
The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
The Honorable Jim Jordan