

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 5, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations,
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

As you consider Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017, we respectfully urge you to provide an increased spending anomaly of \$1.192 billion for the Periodic Censuses and Programs account within the U.S. Census Bureau, as indicated is necessary by the Office of Management and Budget. This increased funding level is essential for 2020 Census planning and testing as well as development for the American Community Survey (ACS).

The 2020 Census is expected to be the largest and most digitally advanced Census ever conducted, embracing new opportunities in technology and data collection that could save more than \$5 billion over the lifecycle of the Census. Failure to provide a funding level increase could cost taxpayers billions of dollars, as the Census Bureau would be forced to revert back to traditional counting methods that threaten both cost effectiveness and accuracy.

This is a critical year of preparation for a successful 2020 Census. In FY 2017, the Census Bureau must make final design decisions and preparations in advance of the 2018 End-to-End Census Test during which all systems and operations will be tested and evaluated as a “dress rehearsal” for operations in 2020. This requires starting the Local Update of Census Addresses program in partnership with state and local governments, updating spatial mapping information using new cost-effective methods, acquiring six new Regional Census Centers and finalizing questionnaire content to be submitted to Congress.

Furthermore, the Census Bureau will continue development of the Integrated Communications Campaign and Partnership Program, submit 2020 Census and ACS topics to Congress, and conduct the 2017 Census Test, which will assess reengineered Update/Enumerate methods for rural and remote areas for the first time

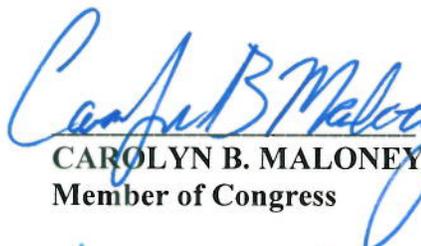
Beyond preparing for the Census, the Bureau is charged with the important task of managing the American Community Survey (ACS) each year. The importance of the ACS cannot be overstated; it provides Congress, state and local governments, businesses, and social service providers with the objective, reliable data they need to invest wisely, stimulate economic growth, and meet the needs of vulnerable populations like veterans, people with disabilities, older Americans, and low income households.

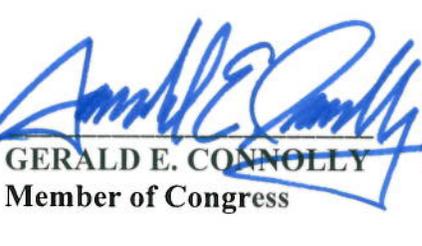
The ACS is the only source of annually updated demographic, social, and economic data for every community in the nation and helps direct \$400 billion in annual federal funding. The modest funding increase requested for the ACS will support continued efforts to improve the ease of responding and the overall experience for our constituents and businesses and ensure data quality. Cuts to the ACS budget could mean many U.S. counties and all rural and small communities go uncounted, leaving these areas without sufficient data to guide planning decisions, resource allocation, and initiatives to attract new business investment. Our most vulnerable communities cannot afford cuts to the ACS.

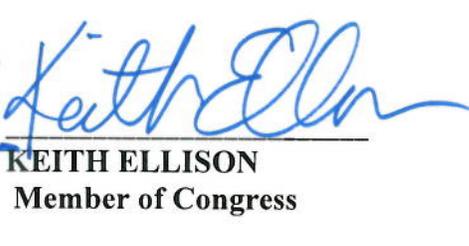
In closing, the Census Bureau will not be able to implement these activities in a thorough and timely way without sufficient funding in FY 2017. Additionally, as we move closer to 2020, the Census Bureau cannot make up for lost time due to lack of proper funding without compromising the integrity and accuracy of the Census funding for preparation.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter. While we recognize and appreciate the challenges your Committee faces in drafting a continuing resolution, we strongly urge you to provide an increased spending anomaly at the level of \$1.192 billion for the Periodic Censuses and Programs account within the U.S. Census Bureau so that it may fulfill its Constitutional mandate effectively and accurately.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


GERALD E. CONNOLLY
Member of Congress


KEITH ELLISON
Member of Congress


BRENDA LAWRENCE
Member of Congress


ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress

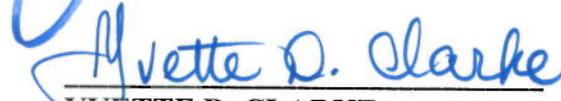

WM. LACY CLAY
Member of Congress


JAMES P. McGOVERN
Member of Congress

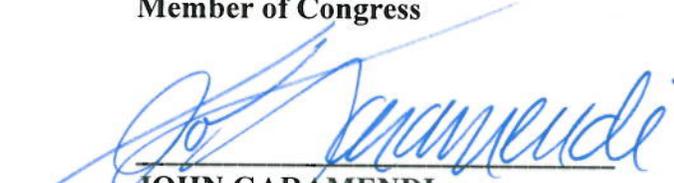

TED W. LIEU
Member of Congress


JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

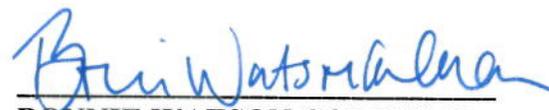

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