



July 26, 2017

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**Support Sufficient Funding for the Census Bureau  
Oppose Any Amendment that Would Undermine the Census or American Community  
Survey**

Dear Senator,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to **prioritize funding for the 2020 Census and allocate at least \$300 million more than the FY 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations Bill, for a total Census Bureau appropriation of at least \$1.8 billion. A higher funding level is required to ensure a fair and accurate 2020 Census in all communities and to avoid large cost increases for the decennial census in the final years of the decade, as well as to preserve the quality of other vital datasets.**

The Leadership Conference considers a fair and accurate census and comprehensive American Community Survey (ACS) among the most significant civil rights issues facing the country today. Census data ensure fair, proportionate voting representation for all Americans. Federal funding for key programs, such as education, health care, and rural broadband access, is determined by census data. Further, census data assist federal agencies, like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, in monitoring discrimination.

The Senate bill is **not a sufficient funding ramp-up** to keep rigorous 2020 Census planning and preparations on track. Already, budget constraints have caused delays and changes in several key operations that could increase census costs in the next few years. The Census Bureau has worked diligently to modernize the census process and to meet a congressional directive to spend no more on the 2020 Census than it did on the last enumeration. **We fear, however, that Congress continues to lower the funding bar, to a point that will make it difficult, if not impossible, for the bureau to maintain acceptable levels of accuracy in 2020.**

Specifically, sufficient 2020 Census funding is needed to:

- Restore a comprehensive census dress rehearsal in urban, suburban, and rural sites in 2018;
- Build out a secure, fully tested IT system for the census; and
- Resume development of a robust communications and partnership campaign, which has been stalled and streamlined due to insufficient funding in 2017.



The U.S. Constitution gives Congress responsibility for getting the census right. No one benefits from a failed census, but certain populations and communities are at greater risk of being missed than others, including low-income households in rural and urban areas, young children, people of color, and immigrants.

We also urge you to **oppose any amendments that would undermine the census or the ACS**. These include amendments that would: (1) shift funds from the Census Bureau to other programs; (2) undermine the ACS, the only source of comprehensive, comparable data for every community in the country, including rural and less populous areas, and for smaller population groups such as veterans and persons with disabilities; or (3) add questions to the 2020 Census that have not been fully evaluated in the field.

We urge you to protect and preserve the quality of the census and the ACS, and provide adequate funding at this pivotal time in the decennial cycle. Thank you for your consideration of our request and concerns. If you need further information or have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Corrine Yu, Leadership Conference Managing Policy Director, at 202-466-5670.

Sincerely,



Vanita Gupta  
President & CEO