



Dear Representative/Senator,

As you work towards a final FY 2018 appropriations solution, the U.S. business community urges you to accommodate the increased funding request from the Secretary of Commerce for an additional \$187 million to support the 2020 Census.¹

The Census is a key building block for our democracy and informs decision-making in both the public and private sectors. The accuracy of the 2020 headcount is threatened by several years of funding shortfalls, resulting in delayed IT upgrades, and reduced field testing (particularly in hard-to-count rural areas and native reservations, and with Spanish-speaking populations). Without adequate appropriations to fully test and deploy new methods and operations, the Census Bureau may have to fall back on outdated and expensive methods: a pen-and-paper door-to-door survey, funded by massive emergency appropriations.

With every other survey in the U.S. built on the population totals from the decennial count, the trickle-down impact of an inaccurate 2020 Census would be severe. That includes impact on the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Economic Census, two other Census Bureau programs upon which the U.S. business community more directly depends.

The population and demographic data that are obtained from these surveys are vital to businesses across America to promote economic development, identify potential customers and create jobs.

The 2020 Census is mandated by the Constitution; the questions in the ACS are required by law; and the data from the Economic Census allows for calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) nationally and for individual states. The combined data are an irreplaceable tool

¹ That is a mere down payment on the extra \$3.3 billion the White House says the decennial headcount will need over the next three years.

for business and industry, allowing us to analyze current and trending demographic and economic shifts, and give us the certainty necessary to plan and execute future investments.

The original White House request for the Census Bureau was \$1.49 billion in FY18; the House-passed CJS appropriations bill had \$1.51 billion and the Senate committee version had \$1.52 billion. Now, the Administration's request is for \$1.66 billion, and even that may not be enough.

The business community is particularly concerned that when it comes time to scramble for the 2020 Census, funding for the ACS and Economic Census may be sacrificed. Any funding diversion from the ACS would reduce the sample size, preventing the survey from delivering accurate data on more than 40% of (mostly rural) U.S. counties and small towns, while funding diverted from the Economic Census would hurt our ability to track national and international productivity, trade, and employment.

Failure to appropriate sufficient funds for the Census now is penny wise and pound foolish. Thank you for taking account of our concerns.

American Planning Association

Associated General Contractors of America

Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER)

Data & Marketing Association (DMA)

DisruptDC

Insights Association

International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)

Internet Association

National Apartment Association (NAA)

National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)

National Association of Business Economists (NABE)

National Association of REALTORS®

National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA)

National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR)

National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC)

National Retail Federation (NRF)

Nielsen

Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)

RV Dealers Association

Sonecon, LLC

Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce