

NATIONAL REVIEW

June 11, 2012

■ House Republicans voted to abolish the Census Bureau's detailed American Community Survey based on concerns about intrusiveness. Participation is mandatory for citizens selected to take part. We sympathize with the abolitionists, but cannot endorse the cause. Perhaps there would be no need for such a survey if we had a minimal state. Given the governments we actually have, however, it is important to have data that bear on which states' policies are working best, where population shifts will require more road-building dollars to move, and whether public-sector employees tend to be overpaid. The alternative in many cases would be policy by anecdote, which often generates stupid results. The survey comes, as it should, with pretty strict privacy protections: Disclosure of personal information by government agents is to be punished with jail time. We've got the right policy now, in other words, and we should leave it in place.