

Population Association of America Association of Population Centers

Office of Government and Public Affairs

8630 Fenton Street, Suite 722 • Silver Spring, MD 20910
www.populationassociation.org • www.popcenters.org • 301-565-6710 x 1006



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May 23, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey,

On behalf of the over 3,000 members of the Population Association of America (PAA) and approximately 40 federally supported population research centers nationwide comprising the Association of Population Centers (APC), we are writing regarding the Committee's upcoming consideration of the Fiscal Year 2017 Commerce, Science, Justice (CJS) Appropriations bill. ***Despite funding the Census Bureau and National Science Foundation below the Administration's request, we urge the Committee to approve the bill and to oppose any attempts during full committee mark up that would further reduce these accounts. Further, we encourage the Committee to support any efforts to increase these accounts during full committee consideration.***

Census Bureau

The bill allocates \$1.47 billion for the Bureau, roughly \$100 million above current year funding, but \$164 million below the Administration's request of \$1.634 billion. Fiscal Year 2017 is a pivotal year for the Census Bureau and its preparations for Census 2020 in which the agency must move quickly to the systems development and operations phase. Proposed activities for FY 2017 include: conducting the 2017 Census Test to evaluate enumerator procedures for some rural areas, including Tribal lands; testing the Census Questionnaire Assistance system; finalizing decisions about use of administrative records for updating address lists and enumerating households that do not respond; and, contracting for over 30 IT systems needed to conduct the census, in preparation for an end-to-end readiness test in 2018.

According to the Census Bureau, funding these and other proposed preparations could save taxpayers \$5 billion over the lifecycle costs of the 2020 Census. A brief summary of the implications for funding the census in FY 2017 is available [here](#).

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During committee consideration of the FY 2017 bill, **we respectfully urge your colleagues to oppose any amendments, if offered, that would further reduce the Census Bureau's funding level by using the account as an offset. In addition, we urge members to oppose any amendments, if offered, that would undermine mandatory participation in the American Community Survey (ACS).** According to the Census Bureau, making the ACS a voluntary survey would increase its annual costs by at least \$90M and reduce its response rates by at least 20 percent. Private and public sector organizations join us in opposing a voluntary ACS. More information about the implications of a voluntary ACS is posted [here](#).

National Science Foundation

The Committee's bill proposes funding the National Science Foundation (NSF) at \$7.4 billion - \$57 million below the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$158 million below the President's request. The NSF is a crucial source of support for the population research community, supporting both individual research and research training awards and large-scale surveys, which are accessible and essential resources for the field. We urge the Committee to consider the importance of this agency for the entire U.S. scientific research enterprise as well, if amendments are offered that would either increase or decrease the NSF account.

Thank you for considering our views and working to protect and improve the Census Bureau and National Science Foundation's funding levels as the FY 2017 CJS appropriations bill proceeds through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Seltzer
President, Population Association of America

Lisa Berkman
President, Association of Population Centers