

March 26, 2010

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Carper
The U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Dent
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Coburn
The U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congresswoman Maloney, Senator Carper, Congressman Dent, and Senator Coburn,

We are writing to express our support for your bill, “Census Oversight Efficiency and Management Reform Act of 2010” and to thank you for your leadership on issues important to preserving and enhancing the mission of the U.S. Census Bureau. With your bipartisan support, the bill represents an unprecedented opportunity to enact reasonable administrative reforms and grant the Census Bureau Director new authorities to run the agency more efficiently, openly, and authoritatively.

In particular, we support the bill’s proposal to create a five-year Presidential term appointment for the Census Bureau Director. This important change would allow the Census Bureau to avoid disruptions caused by changes in administration, especially around the period of the decennial census. Enactment of the legislation in 2012 would mean that, under normal circumstances, a change in Directors would occur on a predictable schedule in years two and seven of each decade. We anticipate that the fixed term will translate into a higher level of continuity and professional independence in the Bureau’s operations. For example, such a fixed term would help avoid what happened in 2009 when the Census Bureau was without a leader during the critical planning period the year prior to the decennial census.

We also support the bill’s components to strengthen the director’s position by establishing a direct report to the Secretary of Commerce, more latitude in communication with Congress, and generally more authority over the Census Bureau, including its personnel and operations. We believe these components will improve ability of the Census Bureau to respond to requests from Congress, the Administration, and data users.

Finally, let us emphasize the importance of enacting this bill promptly since planning for the 2020 decennial census is already underway. We appreciate your service and look forward to working with you towards the enactment of this bill.

American Association for Public Opinion
Research (AAPOR)
American Planning Association
American Statistical Association (ASA)
Arab American Institute Foundation
Association of Population Centers (APC)
Consortium of Social Science Associations
(COSSA)

Latino Census Network
Mid-Region Council of Governments
National Institute for Latino Policy (NILP)
Population Association of America (PAA)
Population Resource Center
Prison Policy Initiative
Southeast Michigan Census Council (SEMCC)
Southern Demographic Association (SDA)