



Dear Representative/Senator,

The U.S. business community urges full Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 funding for the U.S. Census Bureau, especially 2020 Census preparations.

We respectfully recommend that the committee allocate at least \$4.26 billion for the Census Bureau in FY2019 -- in line with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross's revised cost estimate from fall 2018¹ -- but \$4.735 billion would be ideal. While we sincerely appreciate the generous appropriation Congress provided in FY2018, further dramatic ramp up in funding is necessary to make the 2020 Census a success.

A key building block for our democracy, the Census informs decision-making in both the public and private sectors. The accuracy of the 2020 Census is threatened by several years of funding shortfalls, delayed IT and cybersecurity upgrades, and reduced field testing (particularly in hard-to-count [rural](#) areas, and with Spanish-speaking populations). FY2019 is the last chance to ensure that IT systems, innovative methodologies, and new operations are ready for a successful 2020 headcount. Without adequate appropriations now, Congress will shortly be faced with massive emergency appropriations.

With every other survey in the U.S. built on the population totals from the decennial count, the severe trickle-down impact of an inaccurate 2020 Census would last for a whole decade. 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 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 fuels the calculation of the Gross Domestic

¹ According to audit results shared by Commerce Secretary Ross in fall 2017.

Product (GDP) nationally and for individual states. The combined data are an irreplaceable tool 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 \$3.8 billion in FY 2019, \$460 million below Secretary Wilbur Ross' revised cost estimate (\$4.26 billion) and \$933 million short of what the Census stakeholder community contends we need (\$4.735 billion).

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 robust funds for the Census in FY 2019 would lead to inaccuracies that will have a significant, long-lasting impact on businesses who depend on this trusted official data to make material decisions each day. Manufacturers, retailers, and financial analysts use the data to measure a company's health, compensate employees, quantify ROI, identify new opportunities, forecast performance, and optimize consumer price and strategies.

Without accurate Census data on the U.S. population, our economy would suffer.

Thank you for taking account of our concerns.

ACT | The App Association
Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA)
American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC)
American Planning Association
American Staffing Association
AMT - The Association For Manufacturing Technology
Coin Laundry Association
Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA)
Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA)
Council for Community and Economic Research
Data & Marketing Association (DMA)
Household & Commercial Products Association
Insights Association
International Council of Shopping Centers
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
Nareit
National Apartment Association
National Association for Business Economics
National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)
National Association of REALTORS®
National Automobile Dealers Association
National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC)
National Restaurant Association
National Waste & Recycling Association (NWRA)
Nielsen
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Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
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