

December 14, 2017

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
Subcommittee  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Vice Chairwoman  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
Subcommittee  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Culberson  
Chairman  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
Subcommittee  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jose Serrano  
Ranking Member  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
Subcommittee  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairwoman Shaheen, Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Serrano:

The undersigned real estate organizations are writing to reinforce the importance of funding for the United States Census Bureau. With the 2020 Decennial Census quickly approaching, and funding at risk for the American Community Survey and the Economic Census, we would like to emphasize the benefits of publicly available data for both the private and public industry.

For all our organizations, Census data is the building block of our research. While there are many private data providers that are used in concert with Census data, the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) remain the most reliable sources of data in many locations, especially in rural communities. The ACS is the *only source* of objective, consistent, and comprehensive information about the nation's social, economic, and demographic characteristics down to the neighborhood level. Since the introduction of the ACS in the mid-2000s, Census data have been even more reliable in terms of picking up large changes in the U.S. economy. Had the ACS not existed, the impact of the late 2000s recession would not have been measured until the 2010 Decennial Census, a full two years later.

In addition to the real estate trade organizations, our member firms utilize Census data regularly as well, which are not available from any other source. Some of the basic business and investment decisions that are based on the ACS include:

- Growth or sales forecasting
- Small business lending
- Supply chain planning (over/under-investment)
- Infrastructure investment
- Geographic-oriented asset allocation
- Facility alignment (facility or mix isn't right for the market)
- Timing for opening or expansion of a new facility

- Facility positioning for trade area characteristics (area has transitioned in ages, incomes, ethnicities, etc. since last census data).
- Efficient marketing or merchandising strategies
- Hiring decisions
- Risk analysis
- Other opportunities for serving the community effectively

In addition to funding the ACS, we ask that you fully fund the 2020 Decennial Census. The Decennial Census remains the only full count of the entire United States population (the ACS is based off of sample data), and requires a great deal of preparation that begins well before 2020. The Census Bureau has been working to improve their operations to develop more efficiencies, but funding is necessary to achieve this goal.

The undersigned respectfully request that you carefully consider the importance of the Census Bureau and its data products. A fully funded Census Bureau ensures that they can provide the most reliable data possible, which helps everyone. The real estate community we collectively represent relies on this important information. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

American Resort Development Association  
Appraisal Institute  
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing  
Institute of Real Estate Management  
International Council of Shopping Centers  
National Affordable Housing Management Association  
National Apartment Association  
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of Housing Cooperatives  
National Association of REALTORS®  
National Leased Housing Association  
National Multifamily Housing Council