

## ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF SAVING THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

May 30, 2012

Dear Senators,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations we ask you to ensure that the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2013, S.2323 includes sufficient funding for the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and does not include language that will end this important service to the American public. As the US Census Bureau has stated,

“the census is conducted once every 10 years to provide an official count of the entire U.S. population to Congress, the American Community Survey (ACS) is conducted every year to provide up-to-date information about the social and economic needs of your community. The ACS shows how people live--our education, housing, jobs and more. For example, results may be used to decide where new schools, hospitals, and emergency services are needed.”

On May 10, 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives voted in favor of an amendment put forth by Rep. Daniel Webster (R-FL) that would defund the ACS. This action is opposed by many organizations that value accountability and openness in government. The information gathered by the ACS is utilized by the federal government to properly allocate federal funds. As Rep. William Lacy Clay (D-MO) pointed out on the House floor, “In fiscal year 2008, 184 Federal domestic assistance programs used ACS-related data to help guide the distribution of \$416 billion. That's not chump change; it's taxpayer dollars. This represents 29 percent of all Federal assistance.” This data is also an important tool for the business community. For example, companies use the ACS when considering potential expansion of retail establishments because the ACS provides data and characteristics on neighborhoods. In addition, manufacturers and service sector firms use ACS data to identify and understand income, education, and occupational skills of local labor markets.

As you consider S.2323 in the coming weeks, please ensure sufficient FY 2013 funding of the ACS is provided so that the US Government will be able to make effective investments in programs and services based on sound data acquired through the American Community Survey. Please oppose any effort to defund the American Community Survey.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries

American Association of University Professors

American Library Association

Association of Research Libraries

Defending Dissent Foundation

Freedom of Information Center at the Missouri School of Journalism

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Freedom of Information Coalition

National Priorities Project

OMB Watch

OpenTheGovernment.org

Society of Professional Journalists

Tully Center for Free Speech at Syracuse University

Understanding Government

Utah Foundation for Open Government

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