

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski,

We are writing to urge you to provide the Census Bureau the much needed financial resources it needs in Fiscal Year 2017 to prepare for the 2020 Census.

The Census is vitally important to our nation's future. Not only does it assist state and local government in planning critical services and investments, but businesses and non-profit organizations rely on the accurate, accessible data provided by the Census to plan their investments and services as well. The critical role played by the Census in helping to create economic opportunities and services in our local communities is too often overlooked. Businesses across the nation use Census data to create new jobs, develop new projects to meet population needs, and expand to new areas. Non-profits in our states, from hospitals to community organizations, use Census data to better understand the needs of their localities.

Fiscal Year 2017 is a critical year of preparation to successfully execute the 2020 Census. The Bureau is conducting research and operational development on new data collection technology that could save the taxpayers more than \$5 billion over the lifecycle of the Census. Next year, the Census Bureau must complete production of interoperable systems to implement a re-designed Census as well as initiate the Local Update of Census Addresses program in partnership with state and local governments, finalize questionnaire content for congressional approval, and acquire Regional Census Centers. Additionally, the Bureau will be preparing to perform an End-to-End Readiness test in 2018, requiring completion of the new information technology systems.

Accurate planning and testing is crucial in the years before the actual 2020 Census in order for it to be rolled out correctly and as efficiently as possible. Enumerating all U.S. residents is a time intensive and complicated process because the U.S. population is large, transient, and distributed over a wide geographic area. Importantly, we need to understand the population in order to make the efficient investments we need to compete in the global economy.

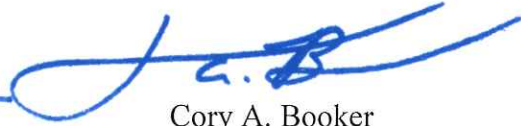
We respectfully request that you fund the Census Bureau at the President's requested fiscal year 2017 budget level, \$1.6 billion, to enable the Census Bureau to adequately plan and test data collection methods. This funding supports future investments to strengthen our economy – like education innovation, and infrastructure. Failure to invest in planning and

preparation now could leave the Census Bureau with no choice but to use traditional counting methods that are expensive and less accurate. A well-funded Census Bureau will lead to more efficiency and innovation, which in turn will save taxpayer dollars in the future, and result in a more cost effective, accurate 2020 Census.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator