

**Testimony on behalf of the
Population Association of America/ Association of Population Centers
Regarding the Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations for the Census Bureau
and National Science Foundation**

Submitted to the

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jose Serrano, Chairman and

The Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member

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Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers

Thank you, Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Aderholt, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, for this opportunity to express support for the Census Bureau and the National Science Foundation (NSF). These agencies are important to the Population Association of America (PAA) (www.populationassociation.org) and Association of Population Centers (APC), because they provide direct and indirect support to population scientists and the field of population, or demographic, research overall. In FY 2020, we urge the Subcommittee to provide the Census Bureau with \$8.448 billion--a robust level of funding that will ensure the agency's ability to conduct the 2020 Census as well as sustain other vital survey programs, including the American Community Survey (ACS). In addition, PAA and APC support \$9 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF), consistent with the recommendation of the Coalition for National Science Funding;

The PAA and APC are two affiliated organizations that together represent over 3,000 social and behavioral scientists and almost 40 federally funded population research centers nationwide that conduct research on the implications of population change. Our members, which include demographers, economists, sociologists, and statisticians, conduct scientific and applied research, analyze changing demographic and socio-economic trends, develop policy and planning recommendations, and train undergraduate and graduate students. Their research expertise covers a wide range of issues, including adolescent health and development, aging, health disparities, immigration and migration, marriage and divorce, education, social networks, housing, retirement, and labor. Population scientists compete for funding from the NSF and rely on data produced by the nation's statistical agencies, including the Census Bureau, to conduct research and research training activities.

The Census Bureau

The Census Bureau is the premier source of data regarding U.S. demographic, socio-economic, and housing characteristics. While PAA/APC members have diverse research expertise, they share a common need for access to accurate, timely data about the nation's changing socio-economic and demographic characteristics that only the U.S. Census Bureau can provide through its conduct of the decennial census, American Community Survey (ACS), and a variety of other surveys and programs.

A year from now the 2020 Census will be in full swing, with most American households receiving their census materials in mid-March 2020. Fiscal Year 2020 is Congress' last opportunity to provide the necessary resources to conduct a successful 2020 Census. Insufficient, delayed, or uncertain full-year funding for the 2020 Census at the start of the FY 2020 jeopardizes the agency's ability to meet its constitutional mandate to conduct the decennial census and to do so inclusively, accurately, and cost effectively.

In its FY 2020 budget submission, the Trump Administration claims it is requesting \$7.2 billion for the Census Bureau. For several reasons, this proposed funding level is misleading as well as inadequate. First, the request is misleading because it applies \$1 billion in carry over funds from FY 2019 to be spent in FY 2020. As a result, the Administration's request represents only \$6.2 billion in direct new funding for the Census Bureau. Congress did not intend for the Bureau to carry over additional funds provided in FY 2019 to be spent in FY 2020. PAA and APC, along with other census stakeholders, were pleased that in a report accompanying H. J. Res.31, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019, Congress clearly stated these funds were to be spent in FY 2019 on priority activities that "maximize self-response to the 2020 Census," including increasing partnership program staff, expanding communications activities, and opening local Questionnaire Assistance Centers in hard-to-count communities. Even with the \$1 billion in carry over funds, the Administration's FY 2020 request is inadequate. It falls short of the amount, \$7.4 billion, that Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, as part of his revised census lifecycle cost estimate (\$15.6 billion), told Congress the agency needs in FY 2020. Further, the Administration's request doesn't reflect two historical census funding trends: 1) about half of the census lifecycle costs is spent in the census year; and 2) census year funding is for the decennial census is at least twice the funding level of the prior fiscal year. The FY 2019 appropriation for the 2020 Census was just above \$4 billion (\$3.015 billion and \$1.056 billion in carry over funds).

PAA and APC join other census stakeholders in urging the subcommittee to provide the Census Bureau with \$8.448 billion in FY 2020, including \$7.581 billion in direct funding for 2020 Census preparations. A meaningful and substantial increase above the Administration's request is imperative to fully fund not only the 2020 Census, but also to support the Bureau's other essential survey and data collection efforts, including the American Community Survey and Survey of Income and Program Participation—two surveys that would be cut under the Administration's request.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

The mission of NSF is to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense. Understanding the implications of complex population dynamics is vital to the agency's mission. The Directorate of Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) Sciences is the primary source of support for the population sciences within the NSF. The Directorate funds critical large-scale longitudinal surveys, such as the *Panel Study of Income Dynamics*, that inform pressing policy decisions and enable policy makers to make effective decisions. Other projects, such as the *Social Observatory Coordinating Network*, integrate social science and health research, linking community and national data to improve population health.

NSF is the funding source for over 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America's colleges and universities, including basic behavioral and social research. Moreover, the SBE Directorate funds more than half of the university-based social and behavioral sciences research in the nation.

PAA and APC, as members of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), rejects the Administration's proposed NSF FY 2020 budget request, \$7.066 billion, which represents a 10 percent decrease in funding over the FY 2019 enacted level. Instead, we urge Congress to build upon last year's momentum, in which the agency received a generous \$400 million increase over its FY 2018 funding level, by providing NSF with \$9 billion in FY 2020. The funding level, which represents a 10% increase over the FY 2019 enacted level, will enable the NSF SBE Directorate to continue its support of social science surveys and a robust portfolio of population research projects. The NSF also continues to focus on interdisciplinary research initiatives, recognizing that social and behavioral factors are intrinsic to many critical areas of research—for example the ongoing *Understanding the Brain* initiative. Increased funding in FY 2020 will allow NSF to continue funding the most promising grant applications that promote transformational and multidisciplinary research and to support new promising research as part of the *Big Ideas* initiative. Steady and sustainable real growth will enhance the nation's capability to make new discoveries, leading to new innovations.

Thank you for considering our requests and for supporting federal programs that benefit the population sciences.