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January 24, 2025

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the organizations we lead, the [Population Association of America](#) (PAA) and [Association of Population Centers](#) (APC), we congratulate you on your recent election to the U.S. Congress. Our organizations and the thousands of scientists and U.S.-based institutions that we represent are looking forward to working with you and your staff during the 119th Congress.

PAA and APC are two affiliated organizations that together represent over 3,000 population scientists, including demographers, sociologists, economists, and epidemiologists working in the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors, and [44 federally funded population research centers nationwide](#), respectively. Our members compete for discretionary funding from federal scientific research agencies, including the National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation, to conduct their research, training, and evaluation activities on the causes and consequences of population change. In addition, they rely on data produced by the Federal statistical agencies, including the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and National Center for Health Statistics, to inform their research and training activities. Our members' research expertise spans a wide range of areas including aging, mortality, fertility, disability, adolescent health, population forecasting, labor dynamics, immigration, and family dynamics.

Population scientists are committed to improving individual health and well-being and informing evidence-based policy making. As an illustration, here are some examples of impactful, recent research findings that our field has contributed:

- Population scientists, using data provided by the National Center for Health Statistics, identified [the "diseases of despair"](#) public health phenomenon, which found that the rate of these deaths (attributable to suicide, alcohol and drug related deaths especially among middle-aged non-Hispanic whites) had doubled between 2000 and 2017.
- [Feeling lonely increases the risk for dementia](#) by 31%, according to an analysis of data from multiple population-based studies, including the Health and Retirement Study, which is supported by the National Institute on Aging (NIA).

- Despite conventional thinking, based on data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement (supported by the National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), [research suggests electronic media use and video games](#) generally have benign or positive effects on academic outcomes.
- Data from the NICHD-funded Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study [found](#) that father involvement protects against negative adolescent behaviors even among children with nonresidential fathers and for both boys and girls.
- Long-term exposure to air pollution is associated with [loss of independence among older adults](#). Recent research supported by NIA identified traffic pollution as a key risk factor for older adults needing personal care.
- Results [published](#) in *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences* using resting electroencephalography (EEG) showed that infants whose families received financial assistance exhibited more high-frequency brain activity after the first year of economic support, in a pattern that has been associated with the subsequent development of higher-order cognitive skills.

On April 10, the PAA, in conjunction with its annual scientific meeting in Washington, DC, will be sponsoring an advocacy day in which we will be bringing population scientists to Capitol Hill to discuss their research and the role that Federal agencies play in directly and indirectly supporting the population sciences. We are looking forward to meeting with many offices that day and throughout the year, especially given our membership in numerous DC-based coalitions.

Once again, we offer our heartfelt congratulations and express our interest in being a trusted resource to you and our staff.

Sincerely,



Dr. Irma Elo, President
Population Association of America



Dr. Sarah Burgard, President
Association of Population Centers