



AMERICAN
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

October 14, 2004

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary
S-146 The U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-6027

Dear Senator Gregg:

I am writing to express the very strong support of the American Sociological Association (ASA) for the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), and to urge you maintain or increase the FY 2005 House appropriation as the Census Bureau's funding bill reaches the conference committee. The ASA represents nearly 14,000 sociologists in the United States who are already using ACS data for vital research on America's communities.

In our increasingly complex "24/7" economy, timely and high-quality data have become an indispensable component of the public, commercial, and scientific infrastructure in American society. Quality information is required to make efficient and informed decisions, and the ACS is a well-designed plan to deliver such. It is supported enthusiastically in both the private and public sectors as a necessary advance toward providing the kind of frequent data that more closely matches modern needs of our nation's businesses, governments (local, state, and federal), and research communities. Providing such data once every ten years in the decennial census simply doesn't meet current demands. The ACS also will simplify the decennial census process by shortening the number of questions asked and will spread the financial and respondent burden evenly across the decade. The plan makes good sense. It simply needs adequate funding.

We recognize that the federal budget is in deficit, but devoting an additional \$80 to \$100 million to the ACS will pay off many times over. The "savings to be gained" by not funding this initiative would only be illusory, as the economic benefits of continuing the ACS are tremendous. Decision-makers across the country will use the data as they analyze how best to allocate their own scarce financial resources. The ACS is precisely the kind of investment that community leaders, policy-makers, and scientists expect — and they are already eagerly awaiting the full launch of the ACS. Congress should meet that expectation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sally T. Hillsman".

Sally T. Hillsman, PhD
Executive Officer