

May 20, 2015



The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
H-309 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1028 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515



Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Fattah:

On behalf of the Big 7, a coalition of national organizations that represent state and local officials, we respectfully urge you to support continued funding of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) as you proceed with your deliberations on the FY16 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.



The ACS is an ongoing statistical survey that samples the population each year in order to provide communities the information they need to plan investments and services. It is the most relied upon source of current socio-economic, housing and financial information in the country. The federal government, states and local communities all depend on this survey's essential data.



The ACS is the largest and only data set of its kind. Its critically important information is used to determine the amount of federal funds states and local governments receive for essential services such as education and public health. The survey's income data is used to determine federal allocations for Medicaid, a program that accounts for an estimated 43 percent of all federal grants to states. State and local governments also use ACS data to make funding decisions about roads, highways, schools, hospitals and other critical infrastructure projects.



State and local policymakers depend upon this detailed, high-quality data in order to make the right decisions to benefit the citizens and communities they serve. Decreasing funding or making the program voluntary would degrade this irreplaceable statistical information that is essential to informed decision making regarding the allocation of resources and investments and other policy matters.



We look forward to working with you to support continued funding of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) as you proceed with your deliberations on the FY16 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,





D Crippen *William T. Pound*

Dan Crippen
Executive Director
National Governors Association

William T. Pound
Executive Director
National Conference of State Legislatures



David Adkins

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Tom Cochran
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Robert J. O'Neill, Jr.

Robert J. O'Neill, Jr.
Executive Director
International City/County Management Association



CC: Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives