

American Statistical Association Urges House Leadership to Expedite Passage of Census Oversight Efficiency and Management Reform Act

28 Organizations have signed a letter supporting House passage and signing of the bill into law by year's end

ALEXANDRIA, VA, DECEMBER 13, 2010 – The American Statistical Association (ASA), the nation's preeminent statistical society, is urging House leaders to obtain swift bipartisan passage of the Census Oversight Efficiency and Management Reform Act (H.R. 4945). The Senate unanimously passed its version of the bill, S. 3167, on December 8th. Along with 27 other census-stakeholder organizations, ASA has signed a letter to House leadership asking that the bill be passed so that it can be signed into law by President Obama before year's end to help facilitate planning for the 2020 census, which is already underway.

In the letter, the signing organizations support the bill's proposal of a five-year Presidential appointment for the Census Director, which would help avoid disruptions in Census leadership caused by changes in administration, especially around the period of the decennial census. Other key federal statistical agency heads, such as the Commissioner of Labor Statistics, already enjoy fixed, five-year terms of appointment. "We anticipate that the fixed term will translate to a higher level of continuity and professional independence in the Bureau's operations," the letter states. "We also support the bill's components to strengthen the director's position by establishing a direct line of reporting to the Secretary of Commerce, more latitude in communication with Congress, and generally more authority over the Census Bureau, including its personnel and operations."

"As the Nation's largest general purpose statistical agency, the Census Bureau has other major statistical responsibilities in the years between Decennial Censuses," said Vincent P. Barabba, Census director under Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter, and a former ASA president. "The priorities that are required to meet this broad responsibility sometimes are hampered by the current reporting structure within the Department of Commerce. This bill strikes a balance by keeping the Bureau within the Commerce Department while allowing it to more effectively and efficiently meet its broader requirements as the Fact Finder for the Nation."

"The American Statistical Association is a strong supporter of the U.S. Census Bureau, the largest federal statistical agency," said Sally Morton, ASA past president. "Passage of this bill will help the Census Bureau do its job more efficiently. We thank the U.S. Senate for its unanimous, bipartisan support, and we hope the U.S. House of Representatives acts quickly to take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity to create a higher level of continuity and professional independence in the Bureau's operations."

The complete text of the letter as well as a list of the organizations that have signed can be viewed at:
<http://www.amstat.org/outreach/pdfs/2010MaloneyDentCensusBill.pdf>.

About the American Statistical Association

Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, the American Statistical Association is the world's largest community of statisticians and the second oldest continuously operating professional society in the United States. For 170 years, the ASA has supported excellence in the development, application, and dissemination of statistical science through meetings, publications, membership services, education, accreditation, and advocacy. Its members serve in industry, government, and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information about the American Statistical Association, please visit the ASA web site at <http://www.amstat.org> or call 703.684.1221.

#####

For more information:

Rosanne Desmone
703.799.8165
703.946.3820 (mobile)
rdesmone@mtvernonpr.com