

PREPARED STATEMENT OF
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Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Aderholt, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to be with you today. I want to start with appreciation for your strong support of the work of Census Bureau. We are deeply grateful for the support of the Congress for the last two years in providing the budget for the 2020 Census. We—including the career leadership with whom I am privileged to serve—are highly confident our funding in place for Fiscal Year 2019 and the budget request for 2020 supports the operations for a complete and accurate count of all persons living in the United States of America.

The FY 2020 budget request totals of \$7.2 billion in total resources, including \$1 billion in funds carried over from prior years, an increase of \$3.3 billion (88 percent) over FY 2019. Highlights include:

- \$6.3 billion for the 2020 Census;
- \$83.3 million for the Census Enterprise Data Collection and Processing (CEDCaP) program, an integrated and standardized data collection and processing system;
- \$64.9 million to transform our data dissemination systems;
- \$139.6 million to continue implementation and begin data releases from the reengineered 2017 Economic Census and the 2017 Census of Governments; and
- \$561.0 million to continue collection of the monthly, quarterly, and annual data on our economy and society – including Principal Economic Indicators, data from the American Community Survey, and releases from dozens of other economic, demographic and geographic programs.

Of course, our top priority for FY 2020 is a complete and accurate decennial census count. One important thing the subcommittee addressed in our previous appropriations is the certainty of funding. In FY 2018, you provided advanced funding of \$1 billion. The advanced funding allowed us to continue our work on the decennial census during the funding lapse, and I thank you for that. The timing of funding is key to maintaining our schedule as we move into FY 2020. To remain on schedule, we must have certainty regarding the FY 2020 appropriation at the beginning of the fiscal year.

I am excited about where we are right now, less than a year from Census Day 2020. We are on schedule, on budget, on message, and on course to complete the biggest and best census ever. Our mission is to count every person living in the United States once, only once and in the right place. With your continued help, I am confident that we will accomplish our mission.

We continue to experience key successes, making us confident that our budget will support a complete and accurate 2020 Census. We have made a number of dramatic improvements and innovations since 2010, including:

- Better technologies and improved processes for canvassing neighborhoods to develop complete and updated address listings;
- New options for responding – by internet, phone, or paper;
- More language assistance than ever before;
- Expanded and efficient customer assistance phone centers;
- More partners and specialists to reach hard-to-count populations;
- Better technologies and efficient processes for census takers;
- Sophisticated, greatly expanded media campaign with new ways to reach people and communities, including hard-to-count populations; and
- Advanced IT security safeguards and privacy protections to ensure that the confidentiality is not compromised.

These successes and our time-tested operations have increased our confidence we can conduct a complete and accurate census within the budget request.

2018 End-to-End Test

I would like to go over highlights of our successful End-to-End Census Test in Providence County, Rhode Island, our last operational test before 2020 operations. In that dress rehearsal, we successfully tested and deployed the operations and systems necessary to support census operations. This was a significant accomplishment, and we learned a lot.

The productivity of census takers was 1.56 cases per hour, up by nearly 50 percent, from 1.05 cases per hour in 2010. This efficiency was higher than anticipated, and we are adjusting our assumptions accordingly. Another important learning from the Nonresponse Followup operation concerns the removal of vacant and nonexistent housing units using data already provided to the government, what we call administrative records. We discovered that a significant proportion of these housing units turned out to be occupied. So we have added an onsite visit to all of them prior to their removal from the NRFU workload in the 2020 Census. Census enumerators will examine each to ensure that no one is living there. If they appear to be occupied, they will be visited during the NRFU operation.

Self-response also exceeded our projections. More than half of all households, 52.3 percent, responded to the test on their own, surpassing the projected rate (49.3 percent) by 3 percentage points. It is important to note that this response rate came without the motivation of an advertising campaign, increasing our confidence that an estimated self-response rate of 60.5 percent in 2020 is a very realistic projection, as we will have a more robust communications effort than in 2010. We also noticed that during initial visits in the Nonresponse Followup Operation, self-response increased when enumerators left notices of visit. New technology introduced for the 2020 Census lets us immediately remove late self-responding households from the Nonresponse Followup workload for the first time. The result is reduction in unnecessary household visits, which are expensive for the Census Bureau and frustrating to households that have already responded.

All three modes of self-response were successfully deployed. Of those who self-responded, 61.2 percent chose the internet, 31.3 percent chose traditional paper forms, and 7.5 percent chose to respond over the phone, in line with projections. The internet self-response and phone response are among the many innovations for 2020 compared to 2010 when we had a 100 percent paper-based operation, and this is consistent with our projections and experience in tests earlier in the decade.

We successfully automated the processes for recruiting, hiring, and training. Also, we automated daily payroll and expenses on a handheld instrument—saving time and money over the paper forms, manual processing, and in-person meetings necessary in 2010.

Our enumeration devices worked well. Enumerators were able to conduct interviews and have their work assigned remotely, eliminating the need for paper assignments delivered daily through in-person meetings. As households self-responded, they were removed from the master list automatically, reducing unnecessary visits. Our routing system helped enumerators achieve the higher productivity rate, another innovation over prior paper lists and maps used in 2010. Most importantly, information obtained in interviews was kept safe and securely encrypted at all stages.

On March 29, we completed the final step of the test by producing the prototype of the redistricting files based on the test enumeration of Providence County. We look forward to input from states and other stakeholders as we finalize the design of the 2020 redistricting files.

Privacy Protections

Confidentiality is a core part of the Census Bureau’s culture, and privacy safeguards are reinforced across all of our statistical programs and activities. Title 13 of the U.S. Code is straightforward and provides strong protections proven over numerous decades. Title 13 requires responses to Census Bureau surveys and censuses to be confidential and used only for statistical purposes. All staff working with confidential information at the Census Bureau take a lifetime oath to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondent information. We do not and will not share confidential information with law enforcement or any other agency. Unlawful disclosure is a federal crime punishable by a \$250,000 fine or five years in prison, or both.

We take every precaution to ensure that individual responses will not be released or revealed, and we are adopting cutting-edge methodologies to protect the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau has adopted disclosure avoidance methods that are the gold standard for modern privacy protection in computer science and cryptography. We are resolved to use modern technology and methods to protect the privacy and confidentiality of every respondent. All of the data and publications of the

2020 Census will be protected because it is imperative above all else that we ensure the trust of the American people.

We have a comprehensive approach to maintaining data security. To complete our mission, the American public must trust that we are able to protect the data they provide. We are working closely with the Department of Homeland Security, the tech industry, and the intelligence community to defend our systems. We test all systems for security well before they are deployed. We have layering and advanced tools to defend against threats. We encrypt the data at every stage—on our devices, in transit, and at rest in our system. Our security team continuously monitors our systems, scanning for more than 100,000 potential vulnerabilities each month, with more added as potential new threats emerge. We have plans and procedures in place to respond immediately to existing or perceived threats.

Focus in 2019: Preparation

This year, we are focusing on final preparations for the 2020 Census. In-Field Address Canvassing, the first field operation, will begin in August. We will send out staff to verify around 35 percent of the addresses in the country. Our in-field address canvassing activities are designed to discover hidden housing units and those units whose status could not be clearly determined from in-office satellite imagery. The rest have already been verified over the decade with in-office review of satellite imagery, data from the US Postal Service, and other data sources. We also had great input from local and state governments in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program. Submissions to LUCA covered 95.5 percent of the population and 95.7 percent of the housing units. For 2010, LUCA covered only 93.5 percent of the population and 92.9 percent of the housing units. These updates will give us the most accurate and complete address list ever.

Also, this year we are focused on systems readiness. We know from the 2018 test that our systems worked well and integrated effectively. We are continuing to prepare the 52 systems necessary for 35 operations by performing robust testing for security and functionality. Along with the successful deployment in the 2018 test, we have successfully tested the internet self-response system to handle well beyond current projections of concurrent respondents we expect at any given time, and we have the ability to quickly scale up even further to prevent delays, if needed.

2020 Communications and Partnership Campaign

We have used extensive research to guide our communications and partnership planning. The Census Barriers, Attitudes and Motivators Study (CBAMS) survey, with a sample size of 50,000 and 42 focus groups, examined communication challenges. This is far more robust than the 4,000 telephone interviews that were conducted in the research phase of the 2010 Census. VMLY&R—the communications contractor for the 2020 Census—has assembled a diverse team of firms representing the worldwide leaders in advertising, media buying, opinion research, strategic communications, and multicultural subcontractors who are unrivaled leaders in reaching their audiences. They are now using the information from CBAMS to develop the messaging that will drive the campaign. Creative treatments and messaging are now being tested in focus groups and an online survey.

The team also produced and tested our tagline for the 2020 Census, “Shape your Future, Start Here.” It has been incorporated into our logo for the campaign, and this will help ensure a consistent look and feel across all components of the advertising and promotional work we are doing.

Partnership is a critical part of our outreach campaign. We are aggressively recruiting partners to be trusted voices in their communities and at a national level to help motivate people to respond. We are hiring 1,501 Partnership Specialists at the local levels, compared to 800 in 2010, and they will be establishing 300,000 partnerships at the local and regional level, focusing on diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and other communities. In the states, we have near full participation in our program to form state complete count committees, which has been a major focus for the 2020 Census, building on lessons learned about their effectiveness in 2010. We also got an earlier start on our National Partnership Program, securing more than 180 national partners and allies to date. Key organizations include the American Library Association, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the Annie Casey Foundation, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, the National Urban League, and the National Chambers of Commerce. Our integrated partnership team also includes a Census Open Innovation Labs team, looking at the best ways to connect technology, data, government, and local organizations to help communities reach a complete and accurate count.

Our advertising team is currently conducting 122 additional focus groups across the nation to finalize our advertising and messages for the robust advertising campaign. We are finalizing the planning for our

media buys at the national and local level. The same expert multicultural agencies designing advertisements and messaging to motivate hard to count populations to self-respond to the Census are assisting with the media buy for their audiences. Everything about our communications campaign is rigorously researched and tested, and relies on feedback from the hard-to-count populations and audiences we need to reach.

Reaching the Hard-to-Count

Our comprehensive plans include specific efforts to reach hard-to-count populations. Our entire communications effort focuses on motivating everyone—especially the hard-to-count—to respond to the census.

Our research underlying the communications efforts are stronger than ever. For example, the Census Barriers and Motivators Study (CBAMS) included a sample of 50,000 with a 39 percent response rate and 42 focus groups, well beyond the scope of the 2010 research that only reached 4,000 respondents via telephone and included no focus groups. According to our research, people in hard-to-count communities may have questions about whether responding to the census will make a difference in their lives. Also, public knowledge about the scope and purpose of the census needs to be expanded. Some people have concerns about data confidentiality and privacy. Accordingly, our advertising team is developing messaging to emphasize the safety of answering the census and the tangible benefits for local communities. We will emphasize that we will not share responses with anyone, including law enforcement. Our message will connect participation in the census to support and resources for local communities and will educate the public on its purpose and process. It is very important for everyone living in the United States of America to know that responding to the 2020 Census is SAFE, EASY, and IMPORTANT.

We have made a number of improvements since 2010 to address past experiences in undercounting children, particularly children under the age of 5. Our outreach efforts will emphasize including young children. Messaging about the importance of including all children living in a household will be woven throughout the communications campaign, and the Census Bureau will partner with as many education and childcare-related organizations as possible to explore new opportunities to reach families, teachers,

and more. The Statistics in Schools program will focus on improving statistical literacy, and will inform students, their families, teachers, and other members of the community about the 2020 Census.

Our sincere desire to reach hard to count populations goes far beyond what we say in our 2020 communications campaign. It goes into how we actually conduct 2020 Census operations. For example, to ensure we count young children, we will train our census takers to ask specific questions about children when conducting interviews. They will ask households to make sure that all children are included, and we will train them to cover foster children, children living with grandparents, and other living situations.

For rural and other hard-to-count areas, we have plans for areas that do not have adequate broadband access. Using data from the American Community Survey and the Federal Communications Commission, we identify areas with low Internet access, as well as households that are not likely to use the Internet (like the elderly), and we will include a paper questionnaire in our first mailing for these areas. Every non-responding household will receive another paper questionnaire on the fourth mailing. There is also a telephone option anyone can choose. In areas lacking access to or demand for Internet services without well-established mailing addresses linked to locations (PO boxes, rural routes, etc.), we will hand deliver questionnaires and make sure we know where to follow up if the households do not respond.

For American Indian and Alaska Native communities, the Census Bureau conducted 17 tribal consultations with federal and state recognized tribal governments to discuss planning, operations, and communications for the 2020 Census. Also, we will hire locally to have enumerators who understand the community, and we have tribal partnership specialists working with tribal nations to appoint tribal government liaisons and to form tribal complete count committees.

We also have specific operations to count persons experiencing homelessness. We work with shelters, soup kitchens, and other organizations to count the people they serve, and we send enumerators to outdoor areas where people may be staying.

We have more language assistance than ever before. People can respond on the Internet and over the phone in English and 12 non-English languages, covering more than 99 percent of households and 87 percent of those with limited English proficiency. This is an increase from the five languages offered for paper response in 2010. Language guides and additional support materials will be provided in 59 languages. Bilingual, Spanish-English paper questionnaires will be mailed to areas with large numbers of Spanish speaking households. There will be advertising, partnership, and promotional materials in English and the 12 non-English languages at a minimum.

In areas affected by natural disasters, the Census Bureau converts its enumeration operations to “Update Leave,” where Census Bureau employees deliver questionnaire packages by hand. This enables residents to respond to the Census in any of our three modes—by Internet, by phone, or by mail. We update address locations and information and, for those who do not respond, follow up to collect data in our Non-Response Operation. The Update Leave operation will ensure a complete count in Puerto Rico, as well as areas most affected by the fires in California and by Hurricane Michael in Florida. If an area experiences a natural disaster between now and the 2020 Census, we will adapt our plans to make sure those areas are completely and accurately counted.

In addition, the 2020 Census has an entire operation called “Enumeration at Transitory Locations” to count individuals who do not have a usual home elsewhere and are living in transitory locations – hotels, motels, areas with FEMA trailers, and so on.

Finally, during our peak operations in 2020, we quickly will be able to allocate resources by tracking self-responses in real time and identifying wherever self-response rates may be falling below targets.

Closing

I’m also pleased to be testifying next to the Government Accountability Office. We have been working closely with GAO throughout the decade, and their contributions have been instrumental in our preparations for the 2020 Census. I met recently with Comptroller General Eugene Dodaro and his key staff, including those with us today, to discuss our placement on the High Risk list, which recognizes the scope, complexity, and importance of the 2020 Census. We talked through the Census Bureau’s commitment to GAO’s five key components of a healthy program, and the improvements we have made

in areas of vulnerability cited by GAO: Lifecycle Cost Estimation, Operational Innovation, and Cyber Security/Systems Readiness. While there is still work to be done, we have closed 73 of the 97 recommendations made by GAO throughout the decade, and action plans are in place for all recommendations. We appreciate the hard work that GAO continues to do to ensure a successful 2020 Census and believe that we have a strong and constructive relationship.

With all of this, we could use your help in sharing the message across America that the 2020 Census is safe, easy, and important. It is easy because for the first time, you can self-respond online, by phone, or on paper through the mail. These new options create new efficiencies, relieve burdens, and reassure people that assistance is but a phone call away. It is safe because we are using latest and best technologies and practices to protect data confidentiality. For the 2020 Census like all of our statistical programs, we will follow the strict federal law protecting the personal information of respondents. That is simply how we do business in the Census Bureau – no exceptions.

Success is a full, accurate, secure account of every person living in the United States. This is essential because the count is used to apportion the House of Representatives, to allocate hundreds of billions in federal, state, and local funding, and to guide critical decisions by communities, government at all levels, the business community, and many others.

Congress and this subcommittee are critical and valued partners to ensure we can accomplish the mission, and I look forward to our continued work together. Thank you, and I will be happy to answer your questions.