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October 16, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to urge adequate funding for the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau (Census Bureau) to assure accurate and relevant data is collected and disseminated. The AMA very much appreciates that the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Commerce, Justice, and Appropriations (CJS) Bill advanced in June by your Committee includes \$3.82 billion for the Census Bureau, which is more than one billion dollars above the FY 2018 enacted level. As you continue to negotiate with your House counterparts, however, we urge you to match the funding recommended in the House Appropriations Committee CJS Bill, which allocates \$4.799 billion for the Census Bureau.

As you know, FY 2019 is a critical year for 2020 Census preparations. It will be the last opportunity for the Census Bureau to ensure that information technology systems and operations are ready for a successful decennial census. The Bureau needs additional investments to be able to fully launch all necessary administrative and operational components of the 2020 Census, including expanding outreach and education activities and advertising and promotion, especially to hard-to-reach and hard-to-count communities. Additional funding would also allow the Bureau to continue to conduct its other demographic and economic surveys.

The decennial census is critical to determining the allocation of more than \$675 billion in federal funding to states and communities annually. These funds are used for community development, public health, education, transportation, and other community resource investments that are critical to decreasing the health, social, and economic disparities experienced by vulnerable populations. Addressing health disparities experienced by these vulnerable populations is a top priority of the AMA, and accordingly, we support increased funding for the Census Bureau that is closer to the House bill to ensure an accurate and complete count for the 2020 Census.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD