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February 2, 2015

Ms. Jennifer Jessup
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
U. S. Department of Commerce -Room 6616
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Jessup,

As President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, a national social justice organization of Black labor activists, I am writing to submit our comments for the Federal Register Notice by the Commerce Department, Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request, 2015 National Content Test.

In recognition of the need to ensure a complete count of every person in the United States every ten years through the Decennial Census, we are specifically writing to express our strong support for the combined race and ethnicity question option the U. S. Census Bureau is testing through the 2015 National Content Test (NCT) for the 2020 Decennial Census. We believe such a change will significantly increase the response rate by Black population respondents of African, African American, Afro-Latino and Caribbean ethnicity and heritage. Further, the proposed form for 2020 Decennial Census with a combined race/ethnicity question creates a fair and equitable way for ALL groups to write in their country of origin if they wish to differentiate in their self-reporting.

The A. Philip Randolph Institute has chapters positioned across the nation to work with the Census Bureau to help ensure that the Black population is represented in the planning and execution of the 2020 Decennial Census. We are a non-partisan national organization representing the interest of working men and women on issues which directly impact the social- economic status and civil rights of the Black population.

Our organization served as partners to assist the Census Bureau in achieving a successful 2010 Decennial Census that had one of the highest response rates in recent history and plan to partner again with the Census Bureau for the 2020 Decennial Census.

We believe that the combined question option (printed and online) will provide more detailed data that is beneficial for a myriad of critical public and private sector purposes, which are vital to all of the American people in determining such issues as: 1) expanding business development opportunities; 2) providing adequate funding for infrastructure, programs and services in communities across the country (urban and rural); 3) providing accurate data for reapportionment and redistricting of congressional districts by states; and 4) assist in having accurate data for monitoring the enforcement of civil rights laws. Further, we know that the Census Bureau will review this issue at upcoming hearings and respectfully ask that the Bureau include our letter in the official hearing record.

In addition, as the Census Bureau enters the digital age in its effort to stay within federal budget constraints by using an online process for self-response for 2020 census count, it is vitally important that this online process does not leave behind many in our community who do not have access to a computer or a smartphone. We strongly recommend that adequate funds and resources will be in place to ensure the door to door process remains intact to reach hard to count communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Clayola Brown". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a prominent "C" at the beginning.

Clayola Brown, National President
A. Philip Randolph Institute