From: Sheela Kennedy
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: April 2013 proposed revisions to ACS
Date: Friday, May 03, 2013 7:09:50 PM

Dear Mr. Harris-Kojetin,

I am writing in response to the notice of change on p. 22512 regarding proposed changes to the American Community Survey questionnaire.

The proposed deletion of the Number of Times Married variable would represent an important loss of demographic data. Increasingly the vital statistics infrastructure has deteriorated: fewer states collect the on marriage and divorce, and those that do collect only limited information. The ACS is the only source of state and nationally representative data on marriage and divorce data -- and without the number of times married, demographers will be limited in our ability to examine important critical indicators such as the dissolution of first marriages, or rates of re-marriage rates.

The best alternative source is the National Survey of Family Growth which is restricted to persons under age 45. With a rapidly aging population and a graying divorce revolution (as demographer Susan Brown has eloquently described it), we cannot afford to lose any of the marital history questions from the ACS.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sheela Kennedy

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