From: Elizabeth Lipke
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: FW: Changes in Census Bureau"s American Community Survey
Date: Monday, May 06, 2013 10:10:04 PM

Dear Dr. Brian Harris-Kojetin:

Dropping the "number of times married" from the American Community Survey would be harmful to understanding family make-up at a time in our history when this statistic has been changing rapidly. We should continue to collect this information so that we can better analyze and predict trends in family stability and assess the impact of those trends on our nation's costs (such as the higher costs for long-term care in the absence of a stable life-partner to be the caregiver).

Thank you for hard work on this important task.

Best regards,

Dr. Elizabeth Lipke
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From: owner-wsplist@listserv3.auburn.edu [mailto:owner-wsplist@listserv3.auburn.edu] **On Behalf Of** Joyce De Vries
Sent: Monday, May 6, 2013 11:50 AM
To: wmstfac@auburn.edu; <wsplist@auburn.edu>
Cc: Nancy Noe
Subject: Changes in Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Forwarded from Nancy Noe:

Dear IPUMS User,
I am writing to alert you that the Census Bureau is planning to drop the question on "number of times married" from the American Community Survey. For those of us who study family demography, this change would be a major loss. The times married question is not only vital for understanding blended families, it is also necessary for basic studies of nuptiality and marital instability. A recent working paper by Sheela Kennedy and myself demonstrated that the ACS is the only reliable source currently available for national divorce statistics. Without the number of times married, however, the divorce data will be badly compromised; for example, it will be impossible to construct a life table for first marriages, or to estimate the percentage of people who have ever divorced.
The news of this plan appears in the Federal Register in a single sentence at the end of an otherwise harmless notice of request for comments. If you believe as I do that this change would significantly harm the nation's statistical infrastructure, you should make your feelings known to the responsible OMB desk officer, Dr. Brian Harris-Kojetin. He can be reached at (202) 395-7245 or by email at bharrisk@omb.eop.gov. The deadline for comments is May 16.

Thank you,

Steven Ruggles
Regents Professor
Director, Minnesota Population Center