From:	MICHAEL J POTEPAN
To:	Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Cc:	ruggles@umn.edu
Subject:	Comment: ACS to Drop Marriage Question
Date:	Monday, May 06, 2013 12:46:58 PM

Dear Dr. Harris-Kojeten -
I am writing in response to the e-mail below from Dr. Steven Ruggles at the Minnesota Population Center. As a university professor and researcher who uses ACS data every day in my work, I urge you strongly to use your influence allow the number of times married question to remain in the survey. I teach a research methods course for senior undergraduates here at SF State, and in the class I have my students formulate their own research hypothesis and use the ACS data to test it. The availability of such data is a tremendous learning resource for these budding researchers. Each semester, four or five students will inevitably choose a topic where divorce plays a central role, and in almost every case, the number of times married variable is critical to the empirical test of their hypothesis. This may be just a small measure of how important allowing this question to remain in the survey is to the research community, but I hope it gives you some sense of the far-ranging effects a decision like this can have. Thank you so much for listening to my comment.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Potepan Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Economics
San Francisco State University
415.338.2833

From: IPUMS Project [ipums=umn.edu@mail140.wdc02.mcdlv.net] on behalf of IPUMS Project [ipums@umn.edu]
Sent: Monday, May 06, 2013 8:31 AM
To: MICHAEL J POTEPAN
Subject: ACS to Drop Marriage Question - Comments Needed by May 16!

Minnesota Population Center: Home of the IPUMS Is this email not displaying correctly? View it in your browser.

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

Minnesota Population Center | University of Minnesota

Copyright © 2011 University of Minnesota, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
Minnesota Population Center
225 19th Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Sent to mpotepan@sfsu.edu — *why did I get this?*
unsubscribe from this list | update subscription preferences
University of Minnesota · 225 19th Avenue South · 50 Willey Hall · Minneapolis, MN 55455