From: Benjamin Karney
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: About the marital history question in the American Community Survey.
Date: Monday, May 06, 2013 8:35:16 PM

Dear Dr. Harris-Kojetin,

I am writing the Census Bureau's plan 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. Currently, 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.

I believe that this change would significantly harm the nation's statistical infrastructure. Please reconsider.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Karney

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Benjamin R. Karney
Professor
Department of Psychology
UCLA
4560 Franz Hall
P.O. Box 951563
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

E-mail: karney@psych.ucla.edu
Phone: (310) 206-3925
Fax: (310) 206-5895

Web pages: http://www.uclarelationshipinstitute.org/
http://www.mediapsychexpert.com/
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