From: Curtis Simon
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: Marriage Question
Date: Monday, May 06, 2013 12:17:19 PM

Dear Dr. Harris-Kojetin:

The purpose of this email is to voice my concern over plans to eliminate question about the number of marriages from the American Community Survey (ACS). After the Current Population Survey, the ACS is the single most important source of data about the behavior of the American population. Indeed, for those of us who focus on geographic differences in economic behavior, the ACS is even more important than the CPS for answering many questions because its large sample size allows for more reliable estimates at detailed levels of geography such as the Metropolitan Statistical Area.

All researchers who study marriage and divorce patterns would find their lives substantially more difficult, being forced to resort to smaller, less representative samples of the population. This is particularly true for researchers who use geographic variation in behavior to try to understand, the role of marriage market characteristics (for example, population size, educational attainment in the city, the ratios of men to women, and so on) on marriage outcomes.

I urge the Bureau to reconsider the decision to delete the question about the number of marriages. Please do feel free to contact me at 864 656 3966 or cjsmn@clemson.edu if you wish me to elaborate on my concerns or if I can otherwise be helpful in this decision.

Best wishes,

Curtis Simon
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