From:	Jim Hammerman
To:	Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject:	Times married question on American Community Survey
Date:	Monday, May 06, 2013 10:48:32 PM

Dear Brian Harris-Kojetin,
I am writing as a social science/ educational researcher to express my concern about the Commerce Department plans to remove the "Number of times married" question from the ACS. While the other suggested changes (changes in language to refer to African-Americans that delete outdated language, addition of questions on health-insurance premiums and subsidies, more precise information about housing) are all adding to our knowledge about how Americans live, there is important information contained in longitudinal tracking of the "Number of times married" question that will be lost if the question is removed. While some changes to the question may be relevant to account for and reflect the several ways that states are recognizing same-sex unions (whether through marriage or civil union), long-term tracking of marriage and divorce rates in part through a record of the number of times that people marry makes a difference in our understanding of the nature of family structures in the US, the view of marriage or civil union as an important institution, its place in supporting healthy child-rearing, its impact on educational and economic outcomes, and other important questions. I urge you to amend the proposed plans in order to retain the "number of times married" question on the ACS.
Thank you for your consideration,
James K.L. Hammerman