From: Daniel Paredes
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: Please do not drop the marriage question in the American Community Survey
Date: Monday, May 06, 2013 6:27:29 PM

Dear Dr. Brian Harris-Kojetin,

It has come to my attention that the Census Bureau is planning to drop the question on "number of times married" from the American Community Survey. Please do not remove the question on "number of times married" from the American Community Survey. This information is important for researchers who are answering questions about the relationship between marriage and socio-economic status. 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 Steven Ruggles 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. It will be impossible to construct a life table for first marriages, or to estimate the percentage of people who have ever divorced. These are important things to know for social policies aimed at supporting working families.

Thank you and have a great day.

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