From: Deborah Goldschmidt
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: ACS to Drop Marriage Question
Date: Monday, May 06, 2013 12:06:37 PM

Dear Dr. Harris-Kojetin,

It has recently come to my attention that the Census Bureau is planning to drop the question regarding the number of times married from the American Community Survey. As a researcher who studies economics of the family, marital stability, and demography, this is extremely upsetting to me. The ACS is an important data source, and having clear information on marriages and divorces is vital for the type of research that I (and many other economists, sociologists, demographers, and other social science researchers) do. I hope that you can reconsider this action and keep this important variable in the survey.

Thank you very much for you time,
Deborah Goldschmidt

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---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **IPUMS Project** <ipums@umn.edu>
Date: Mon, May 6, 2013 at 11:31 AM
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.

IPUMS

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

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