From: Jason Kerwin
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: ACS Marriage Question
Date: Monday, May 06, 2013 4:24:10 PM

Dear Dr. Harris-Kojetin,

I just received an email (forwarded below) that states that the ACS will be dropping its question on the number of times respondents have been married. I believe this would be a great loss for both economic and demographic research: the last half-century of economics has focused on the inter-relationships between all decisions, because focusing on just explicitly financial ones can lead to misleading results. Although I do not use the ACS myself, I think all of social science would be impoverished by this change.

Best,
Jason Kerwin

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Eric Kyle Lewis**
Date: Monday, May 6, 2013
Subject: SPAM Fwd: ACS to Drop Marriage Question - Comments Needed by May 16!
To: "economics.phd@umich.edu" <economics.phd@umich.edu>

Help contribute to a public good by sending an email!

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **IPUMS Project** <ipums@umn.edu>
Date: 6 May 2013 11:25
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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