From: Brad Hershbein
To: Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject: American Community Survey marriage question
Date: Monday, May 06, 2013 12:04:47 PM

Dr. Harris-Kojetin,

It has recently come to my attention that there is a proposal that the 2014 ACS questionnaire remove the "Number of Times Married" question. I wish to register my strong objection to this proposal. This data item is incredibly important for our understanding of the duration and stability of marriage, the relationship between marriage and women's labor force attachment, and how these phenomena vary across geography, education, number of children, and other factors. Because the ACS is the *only* data source that allows this type of analysis with a significant sample, removing this question threatens our ability to study the determinants and economic outcomes of marriage, divorce, and re-marriage, topics that are of fundamental interest to national welfare. What is more, the burden of answering this one item is very small, so any gains in its omission are vastly outweighed by its costs.

I sincerely urge you to reject the removal of the "Number of Times Married" question from the 2014 ACS.

Thank you,

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