From:	Anthony Webb
To:	IPUMS Project; Harris-Kojetin, Brian
Subject:	Re: ACS to Drop Marriage Question - Comments Needed by May 16!
Date:	Monday, May 06, 2013 11:51:16 AM

Dr Harris-Kojetin,

I do research on the costs long-term care imposes on Medicaid.

There are huge differences between the Medicaid costs of married and unmarried individuals. It is vital that I have good data on marital biographies to project the percentages of succeeding birthn cohorts of the elderly who will be married. Specifically. I need to know whether the current marriage is a first or subsequent marriage because subsequent mariages are less stable. Without the ACS, I couldn't address this important research question.

I urge the government to keep the times married question.

Anthony Webb

From: IPUMS Project <ipums@umn.edu>
Reply-To: IPUMS Project <ipums@umn.edu>
Date: Monday, May 6, 2013 11:25 AM
To: Anthony Webb <anthony.webb.2@bc.edu>
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.

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 atbharrisk@omb.eop.gov. The deadline for comments is May 16.

Thank you,

Steven Ruggles
Regents Professor
Director, Minnesota Population Center

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