

PREPARED STATEMENT OF

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“Progress Report on the 2020 Census”

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Good afternoon, Chairman Gowdy, Ranking Member Cummings, and members of the Committee. We welcome this opportunity to update you on the status of the 2020 Census. Before we begin, we would like to thank Congress for the Census Bureau’s recent appropriation, which underscores Congress’ commitment to a successful 2020 Census. The Department of Commerce and Census Bureau share your commitment and today we will provide a brief review of our progress to conduct a complete and accurate census.

2018 End-to-End Census Test

We are in the midst of the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. This is our final major field test before the 2020 Census. We are testing the interfaces between 44 IT systems critical for the 2020 Census, and their integration with the 24 major operations that are part of the 2018 End-to-End Census Test.

Tomorrow, we begin the Nonresponse Follow-up Operations for the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. Nonresponse Follow-up is an eight-week field operation to gather responses from households that have not yet responded by Internet, telephone, or paper questionnaire. Approximately 56 percent of households in the test did not respond to the Census questionnaire, so we will send approximately 900 enumerators to knock on doors and gather the information. This key operation involves 31 systems with appropriate interfaces, and will provide important feedback as we prepare to conduct the 2020 Census.

The 2018 End-to-End Census Test's Nonresponse Follow-up operation began in August 2017 with the Address Canvassing operation in three locations: Pierce County, Washington; the Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill, West Virginia area; and, Providence County, Rhode Island. These locations allowed the Census Bureau to test systems with and without Internet connectivity and to study critical address list development operations in a wide range of geographical situations including rural and mountainous areas. Importantly, in areas with low Internet connectivity Census Bureau field staff were able to receive their assignments and submit their payroll and operational data at the beginning or end of their shifts. By design, staff began and ended their shifts in areas with Internet connectivity so that they could do this. They did not require Internet access while they were actually conducting the listing operation. We were able to successfully integrate with the operational control system in field conditions. We also integrated with the other decennial systems effectively, such as the system we are using to provide directional information to staff ensuring they complete their work in the most efficient manner possible. Additionally, we tested the implementation of the independent quality control component, which ensures the proper disposition of cases in real time providing us with important information when cases fail to pass quality control.

The 2017 Address Canvassing operation revealed areas where our systems and operations need to improve, especially with regard to training. Some of these areas are being addressed as we continue to refine our training modules. Address listing is a complicated process and we have identified ways to improve technical training. The West Virginia site, in particular, experienced connectivity issues. The challenge of unreliable wireless signals is one of the reasons that site was chosen. Because of connectivity issues, some of the employees hired to carry out the address listing operation had difficulty completing the self-paced online training at their home. We continue to examine the experiences of our listers so that we can enhance this functionality and improve both systems and operations.

Just as we learned a great deal from the Address Canvassing operation, we are learning from the operations conducted in Providence. We will continue to make the necessary adjustments to our systems and operations in response to what we observe and experience during the 2018 End-to-End Census Test.

We opted to conduct the 2018 End-to-End Test in Providence County because it represents an ideal location for testing data collection operations. It offers many different situations and provides challenges that we will face across the country in 2020, and its demographics mirror those of the nation. Providence County has a population of over 600,000, more than a quarter-million housing units, and historically hard-to-count populations. Providence County provides an opportunity to test all of the systems and operations planned for the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. Providence County's urban areas include high vacancy rates, and neighborhoods and housing that have undergone considerable conversion for many years. This allows us to validate our address canvassing operation (for example, identifying split or converted housing units). There also is a solid presence of Group Quarters, which are residences that contain multiple unrelated residents, allowing us to conduct that operation.

The test's self-response phase began with a series of mailings that were sent to housing units beginning in mid-March. We received a high number of responses through the Internet—almost

64 percent of the total responses. Households also are responding by telephone (6 percent) or returning the paper questionnaire by mail (30 percent). However, consistent with our planned approach for the 2020 Census, households only received a questionnaire on the first mailing if the household does not have strong Internet connectivity or if the household is considered unlikely to use the Internet. Households with older people often fall into this latter category. Regardless, every household that had not responded after three mailings received a paper questionnaire on the fourth mailing.

The remaining peak operations in Providence, Rhode Island, are Group Quarters, Update Leave, and Nonresponse Follow-up. The Group Quarters operation is designed to enumerate people who live in places such as college dormitories, skilled nursing facilities, and prisons. The Update Leave operation is designed for areas that do not have a city-style address, such as “100 Main Street,” where the address and the geographic location of the housing units are linked. Areas without city-style addresses are most common in rural areas where mailing addresses are grouped together (e.g., multiple mail boxes grouped together at the end of a rural road) and not tied to the geographic location of the actual housing unit (e.g., Post Office Boxes). During Update Leave, field staff will update our address list and leave a questionnaire packet at each household in this area. Those who do not respond are included in the Nonresponse Follow-up operation where we collect information by sending a census enumerator to interview the household.

All of the planned innovations for the 2020 Census are coming together in the 2018 End-to-End Census Test and the lessons learned will provide a firm foundation for success in 2020. We are looking closely at data from the Address Canvassing operation to make sure that our blend of in-office and in-field Address Canvassing meets our standards for an accurate and comprehensive address list. The Internet and telephone response modes are being thoroughly tested, as is the Paper Data Capture operation. We also are making it easier for people to respond in real time with a smart phone or a tablet. Field staff will collect information using hand-held devices and their work will be managed efficiently and effectively by leveraging automated processes. Finally, we will continue to examine the use of administrative records to inform final determinations about our ability to improve the efficiency of the Nonresponse Follow-up operation using information that people have already provided to the government. During and after the test, we will adjust the systems and operations based on what we learned to make sure that both are ready for the 2020 Census.

Systems Readiness

We developed a comprehensive schedule for developing and integrating the key systems for the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. Each system has its own well-defined scope, requirements, schedule, and costs, and each is overseen by experienced project management teams. As we enter the peak operations of the test, 40 out of the 44 systems supporting the test have been deployed. No system will be released without completing the necessary integration testing and security authorizations. All 44 are on track to be fully integrated and deployed when they are needed to support operations in the test.

The Census Bureau has been working closely with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to ensure that the Census Bureau and the GAO share a consistent understanding of the status of systems readiness, and we both are monitoring final development and testing of the remaining systems needed for the 2018 End-to-End Census Test. All of our systems for the 2020 Census are being integrated through a contracted solution that the Census Bureau refers to as the “technical integrator.”

The Census Bureau’s Office of Information Security, under the guidance of the Department of Commerce’s Chief Information Officer, is working with the technical integrator to ensure that the systems are secure and are authorized to operate (ATO) before going live. The ATO process is critical because it ensures that cybersecurity standards are addressed and risks are minimized for all systems based on federal policies and procedures. GAO is reviewing our progress to ensure that our processes and procedures within our Systems Engineering and Integration framework are consistent with GAO’s best practices. We value GAO’s independent assessment and are appreciative of their continued assessment and support.

With respect to the 2018 End-to-End Census Test and looking forward to the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau is maintaining a well-defined schedule and framework for releasing systems for the remainder of the 2018 Test and then for the 2020 Census. Lessons learned from the 2018 Test will be incorporated to enhance and improve the systems. We also have a well-developed process for conducting the scalability tests on our systems during 2018. The technical integrator is enabling the scalability test using infrastructure in the cloud and the data center. Conducting the scalability tests is a major milestone this year, and we are eager to meet this milestone and fine tune our systems to scale to predicted peak loads in 2020.

Finally, we are engaging with the private sector and the federal government intelligence community in the area of cybersecurity to ensure the information we collect is protected, that we can withstand the threat of cyber attacks, and, if necessary, contain a threat in a way that sustains service and maintains public trust.

2020 Operations Already Underway: LUCA, In-Office Address Canvassing, and Delivery of the 2020 Census Questions

Even as we are in the midst of the 2018 End-to-End Census Test, key operations for the 2020 Census are already up and running. Today, we would like to summarize our progress on the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program, In-Office Address Canvassing, and the delivery of the 2020 Census planned questions to Congress.

LUCA, which began last year, provides tribal, state, and local governments an opportunity to review and comment on the Census Bureau’s address list, while following the requirements of Title 13. More than eleven thousand governmental units, 45 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as major counties and cities, and tribal governments, have registered for the 2020 Census LUCA program. These registrations exceed those for the 2010 Census program and we are pleased that they cover more than 98 percent of both the country’s housing units and the population. The Census Bureau has begun sending these governments their address packages so that they can conduct their review. As of today,

approximately 1200 hundred governments have returned their packages to the Census Bureau, and of these about 30 percent of the submissions have not made any changes to the address list.

The In-Office Address Canvassing operation is one of the important innovations in the 2020 Census. Since 2015, we have been updating the most recent Census Bureau address list with new information from the United States Postal Service and data from tribal, state, and local governments and third parties (i.e., commercial vendors). We also review satellite imagery to help determine where address changes are occurring. Based on these changes, the Census Bureau will develop a plan for capturing those changes. This plan will include In-Field Address Canvassing where address updates cannot be obtained or verified or in areas undergoing rapid change. The number of addresses requiring In-Field Address Canvassing is expected to be approximately 30 percent of the total number of addresses, compared to 100 percent in 2010.

The Census Bureau is required by Section 141(f) of Title 13 of the U.S. Code to submit the subjects proposed for the next census to Congress no later than three years before April 1st of the upcoming decennial year. A document fulfilling that requirement was submitted to Congress on March 28, 2017. Section 141(f) also requires the questions proposed to be included in the next census be submitted to Congress no later than two years before Census Day, which will be April 1, 2020. The document that fulfilled this requirement for the 2020 Census, and the American Community Survey, was delivered to Congress on March 29, 2018. Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, later this year the Census Bureau will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed questions, and then send the proposed questions to OMB.

As background, we would like to provide an overview of the process for determining the content on the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey. The Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau conduct a rigorous legal, technical, program, and policy review of each question to determine whether it should be included for the Decennial Census Program, which includes the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey. When it passed Title 13, Congress delegated to the Secretary of Commerce the authority to determine content for the Decennial Census Program.

Throughout each decade, regular content reviews are conducted to ensure that the information collected through the Decennial Census Program is required by federal programs. In December 2017, the Department of Justice requested that the Census Bureau reinstate a citizenship question on the 2020 Census to provide census block level citizenship voting age population data, which DOJ finds critical to its enforcement of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. This request underwent a thorough legal, technical, and policy review. On March 26, 2018, the Secretary of Commerce directed the Census Bureau to reinstate the citizenship question on the 2020 Census.

For the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau will use the citizenship question currently used on the American Community Survey. A question on citizenship has been asked on the American Community Survey each year since 2005 and also was asked on the long form censuses in 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

The Census Bureau currently is taking steps to make the necessary operational adjustments to all data collection and processing systems to include the new question. The Census Bureau also is

taking steps to further enhance its administrative record data sets, protocols, and statistical models to provide more complete and accurate data. As is our standard practice, the Census Bureau will conduct research and develop this administrative records use strategy in an open and transparent manner, consulting with expert groups and stakeholders.

In addition to citizenship, the 2020 Census will ask questions about age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, relationship, and tenure. Some operational questions, such as name and telephone number, also are asked to better administer the data collection process and to ensure greater accuracy of the data collected. Contact information is not part of the published data and all data collected is carefully protected, as mandated by federal law, to maintain confidentiality and respect the personal information of respondents.

The document *Questions Planned for the 2020 Census and American Community Survey*, which was delivered to Congress on March 29, 2018, includes images of each question, information about why we ask each question, and the federal and selected local community uses of the data.

American Community Survey data are critical for communities and businesses nationwide. The American Community Survey is the nation's premier survey, providing the only source of comparable data for all of America's communities, and will continue to cover more than 35 topics, for example, school enrollment, veteran status and period of service, home value, and computer and Internet use. In 2019 and 2020, the Census Bureau will implement several changes to make it easier for respondents to answer the survey questions and improve the quality of the American Community Survey data.

The 2020 Census also is conducted in the Island Areas of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For the 2020 Island Areas Censuses, we plan to use a modified version of the American Community Survey form that better meets the needs of the Island Areas. For example, we do not plan to ask about home heating fuel but do plan to ask about sewage disposal and source of water. This innovative approach of using existing data collection and processing systems will enable the Census Bureau to more quickly and efficiently tabulate and publish data from the 2020 Census for the Island Areas.

Enumerating Traditionally Undercounted Populations

To ensure a complete and accurate census we also must encourage people to respond. As in past decennial censuses, we will mount a robust Communications and Partnership Program to encourage everyone to respond, including those who are traditionally hard to count. People may be hard to count for different reasons, such as those who are highly mobile, homeless, living in remote areas, living in gated communities, or other reasons.

For the 2020 Census, we are building a research foundation for our Integrated Partnership and Communications Program that is stronger than in 2010. We recently conducted the Census Barriers, Attitudes and Motivators Survey (CBAMS), which consisted of two components. First, a quantitative survey was mailed out to 50,000 households. We expect to receive data from this survey in the summer, which will give us important information about the major population

groups in the country. The second component consists of qualitative focus groups that will allow us to hone in on the attitudes and motivators of smaller population groups and populations that cannot be well represented in the quantitative survey, including Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and people who speak languages other than English or are not proficient in English.

The information we receive from CBAMS will be combined with other data at the Census Bureau that we are using to develop models projecting the likelihood of people to respond. Along with the information from CBAMS, this information will provide us with the strongest research foundation we have ever had. These research efforts will help us ensure that our messaging is as effective as possible and that our advertising and partnership efforts are well-directed. Finally, with the support of the recent appropriation, we are looking at other important communications activities and building out our partnership staff earlier than planned.

We recognize that communications and partnerships are at the heart of reaching traditionally hard-to-count populations. Extensive advertising in media consumed by specific populations is critical. In addition to traditional media, we will be active in digital media and on the Web. Our advertising and partnership support materials will be in multiple languages and we will develop and implement a Statistics in Schools program that will help young people understand the importance of responding to the census so that they can take the message home to their families.

We also plan to strengthen our national and local partnerships. We are currently reaching out to major corporations and national organizations, two years ahead of Census Day, so that they can build support for the 2020 Census into their business plans. This is the earliest we have ever started this effort. In addition, seasoned partnership specialists, many with decades of experience, have been working since January 2017 to help tribal, state, and local governments develop Complete Count Committees, which bring leaders and government officials together to develop plans to support the 2020 Census. As we ramp up to 1,000 partnership specialists in FY 2019, our goal is to exceed the 248,000 community partners we had in 2010. Our partners are the trusted voices in communities across the country. They include schools, hospitals, clinics, legal aid centers, faith-based organizations, and businesses large and small. Census partners help people understand that responding to the census is safe and important, and that their responses are confidential and protected by law.

Our efforts to reach traditionally undercounted populations do not stop with communications and partnerships. Through our language program, we will make it possible to respond to the Census in 12 languages, in addition to English, covering nearly 99 percent of the population, or 87 percent of those with limited English proficiency. Language support materials will be provided in a total of 59 languages, and we are developing templates to help our partners carry our messaging in the languages and dialects spoken by small population groups throughout the country.

To reach people who live in different places and situations, the Integrated Partnership and Communications Program will be the most tailored in our history. In fact, most of the operations we have mentioned—from our field operations, to our communication and partnership efforts, to our language program—are designed to reach people who live in different places or situations. We tailor our operations for rural areas and for areas that have experienced natural disasters.

With that in mind, we also would like to share that we recently made the decision to extend the Update Leave operation that we described earlier across the entire Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This will help us ensure that our address list is correct and that we are adapting to any changes caused by Hurricane Maria. We will make similar changes to other areas as necessary, including the Gulf States impacted by flooding, and those parts of the Western states that experienced wildfires. We also conduct a specific operation in remote Alaska that starts in January of 2020 before the tundra thaws and many people leave their villages. These are only some of the many other examples of the steps we take to adapt our operations to the unique places where people live.

Finally, we are asking federal, state, and local leaders to encourage their constituents to stand up and be counted. We ask that leaders remind the public that the answers they provide on a census form are confidential and protected by law. It is important that community leaders ensure the public knows that census answers may not be used for law enforcement or any other purpose that would reveal a person's identity or how an individual responded to a question. The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the United States Code. This law not only provides authority for the work we do, but also provides strong protection for the information we collect from individuals and businesses.

Anyone who handles census data swears an oath for life to keep those data confidential. Under Title 13, private information is never published. It is against the law to disclose or publish private information. The information the Census Bureau collects cannot be used for any reason except to produce statistics, and violations of Title 13 are punishable by fines and up to five years in prison. The Census Bureau trains every employee, including its field enumerators, on the importance of protecting private information and the importance of the oath, as well as the fact that penalties for violating this law are applicable for a lifetime. Public encouragement and reassurance of this law and our commitment to protecting confidentiality would help achieve our goal of a complete and accurate census in 2020.

2020 Census Activities Supported by the FY 2019 President's Budget

Looking forward, the FY 2019 President's Budget requested \$3.8 billion for the Census Bureau, which includes \$3.1 billion to support the 2020 Census. As noted above, the Census Bureau appreciates Congress' support for the decennial census and the inclusion of an additional \$1.1 billion beyond the program's estimate for 2018 (including contingency funds) in the 2018 Omnibus appropriations act. These funds will help provide financial certainty to the program as we transition from FY 2018 to FY 2019, and represent a down payment on the \$3.1 billion requested in 2019 to continue all preparatory activities and existing field operations.

As we move into 2019, we will undertake a wide range of simultaneous activities designed to finalize preparations for the 2020 Census as outlined in the President's budget. Key activities for the 2020 Census will take place in 2019. We will make final refinements for all systems to ensure they meet all requirements, are secured, are tested, and are seamlessly integrated. The field offices and other field infrastructure must be stood up nationwide in 2019, with the first 40 Area Census Offices (ACO) opening between January and March of 2019, and the remaining 208 offices opening in the summer of 2019. The ACOs will house the managers, staff, materials,

and equipment needed to support the hundreds of thousands of Census Bureau employees conducting local census operations.

Partnership Specialists will work throughout 2019 to build the network of more than 300,000 census partners who will be the trusted voices to encourage communities across the nation to respond to the 2020 Census. In October 2018, we will begin the full-scale development and implementation of all aspects of the communications program, including the establishment of the media spend plans, messaging, and the creative treatments of the advertising campaign. This work lays the foundation for our first advertising buys for the 2020 Census in May 2019.

In 2019, we will conduct the first major field operation for the 2020 Census, which is the In-Field Address Canvassing we mentioned earlier. In this operation, we send field staff to check the accuracy of the addresses in areas that are the most difficult to canvass and cannot be updated by the In-Office Address Canvassing Operation. Approximately 76,000 address canvassing listers and supervisors will be trained and sent into the field to complete this difficult and important work from mid-August to early October of 2019. Recruitment for this operation will take place in the spring of 2019, with training beginning in summer 2019. The operation itself will begin in late summer and stretch to early fall.

The physical printing of the majority of the paper materials for the 2020 Census will begin in June 2019. We also will finalize and secure all of the operations and systems related to the use of administrative records and third-party data and ensure they are working together in preparation for use in the 2020 Census.

Both the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey are essential to the Census Bureau's mission to serve as the leading source of data about our nation's people and economy. All of the censuses and surveys we conduct are important, and we appreciate Congress' support for our work. With less than two years until Census Day, though, we think the Congress is appropriately focused on the 2020 Census, and as you can see, we are now moving ahead at full speed. Much work remains, but we are well-positioned to get it done so that we can conduct a complete and accurate 2020 Census. We look forward to answering your questions.