



05/21/08
for the record
by
Cong. Fortuno

May 21, 2008

The Honorable Luis Fortuno
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Fortuno:

We understand officials from the U.S. Census Bureau are testifying before the House Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives concerning the 2010 Decennial Census, and are writing to state our views about issues to be considered relating to the U.S. Territories.

AARP and its 40 million members across our nation, including over 130,000 in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam, support the inclusion of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the other U.S. Territories in all the census surveys and related summary products such as national totals. We believe this will provide much needed data and information to properly and accurately assess the characteristics of the population living in the Outlying areas (the term used by the U.S. Census to refer to Puerto Rico American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

The data and reports resulting from the inclusion of these geographic areas in all surveys performed by the U.S. Census will assist the U.S. government and organizations like ours in establishing more accurate public policy when dealing with specific matters addressing these territories. Currently, there is a substantial lack of information, particularly pertaining to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, in areas such as poverty, income levels, business profiles, financial data, home ownership, government assistance programs, age, education levels, etc. We believe it is incumbent on the Bureau to correct this longstanding gap in information and to create more complete data gathering and reporting for the socioeconomic benefit of us all.

In conclusion, AARP reiterates the need for – and our support of – the full inclusion of the U.S. Territories in the collecting and reporting of 2010 Decennial Census information.

Sincerely,

David P. Sloane
Senior Vice President
Government Relations & Advocacy