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**Statement of
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**Before the
Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives**

**Oversight Hearing on the Census Bureau's Preparation for the 2010
Decennial Census Survey
July 26, 2007**

Introductory Statement

The U.S. Census Bureau in conducting Census 2000 worked hard on outreach initiatives in collaboration with many national community education outreach projects to improve its count of the American population. These initiatives helped reduce the undercount of populations such as racial and ethnic minorities, children, and immigrants that were disproportionately undercounted in Census 1990 due to language and cultural barriers. While these efforts are to be commended, there are lessons to be learned from implementation of those initiatives that can inform the Census Bureau's planning and preparation for the 2010 Decennial Census.

Planning and preparation for Census 2010 will also have to address the changing demographics the U.S. has experienced since the last Census. As Director Charles Kincannon in his prepared statement to you submitted a few weeks ago,¹ following Census 2000, the evaluation showed that among those populations missed or undercounted are children, especially young children, adult African American males, *recent immigrants*, and persons living in large households, complex households, or in group quarters. In the five years since Census 2000, the Asian American population has grown significantly. The majority of the growth in the Asian American population is attributed to immigration. Twenty-one percent of the Asian American population arrived in 2000 or after. Census estimates from the 2005 American Community Survey show that the Asian American community has grown from the 11.9 million reported in Census 2000 to 14.4 million or a 21 percent increase. In Census 2000, for the first time Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders were reported separately from Asian Americans. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations also grew significantly by 13.3 percent or from 874,000 reported in Census 2000 to an estimated 990,000 in 2005.

¹ Prepared Statement of Charles Louis Kincannon, Director, Census Bureau, Coverage Improvement Plans for the 2010 Census, Before the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, Field Hearing, San Antonio, Texas, July 9, 2007.

In addition to the rapidly growing and changing demographics of the United States, other factors will provide challenges to ensuring a complete and accurate count of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and other racial and ethnic minority groups. In the aftermath of September 11 and the growing number of states and local governments seeking to further restrict immigrants from accessing government services, many immigrants are reluctant to seek services or disclose personal information to the government. Coupled with concerns raised since then that the Census Bureau has inappropriately shared information with government agencies,² many people, particularly minorities, are fearful of providing even the basic information requested by the Census. The Census Bureau will need to affirmatively address these factors in its planning and preparation for Census 2010 including in its recruitment, training and hiring strategies. We believe that the key elements needed for a diverse and culturally competent workforce necessary to achieve the goal of a complete and accurate count of all persons in the U.S are:

- Leadership
- Assessment and Planning
- Community Partnerships
- Adequate Resources

Organizational Background

The Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) is a national advocacy organization dedicated to promoting policy, program, and research efforts to improve the health and well-being of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. Founded in 1986, APIAHF advocates on health issues of significance to AANHPI communities, conducts community-based technical assistance and training, provides health and U.S. Census data analysis and information dissemination, and convenes regional and national conferences on Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander health. APIAHF has five policy priority areas:

- Expand access to health care for uninsured and under-insured Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders;
- Improve quality of health care by promoting cultural and linguistic competency;
- Ensure a diverse and culturally competent health care workforce;
- Increase research and improve data collection of health and health care needs of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders; and
- Increase investment in community-based health promotion programs.

Ensuring that the Decennial Census includes a complete and accurate count of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders is critical to achieving the policy goals outlined above in terms of helping to identify needs and advocate for allocation of resources on the community, local, and state levels.

² It was discovered recently that during World War II the Census Bureau turned over confidential information including names and addresses to help identify Japanese Americans. See Haya El Nasser, *Papers show Census role in WWII camps*, USA Today, March 30, 2007.

In 1992, the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum was designated by the Census Bureau as the official national census information center (CIC) for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. As a CIC, APIAHF provided Census 1990 and 2000 data, analysis and training to community organizations concerned with identifying and serving AANHPI communities throughout the United States. APIAHF also became involved in all aspects of Census 2000, especially to ensure linguistic access and outreach to AANHPI communities. APIAHF assisted in the translation of the Census 2000 questionnaires and accompanying materials into Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog and Korean and conducted focus groups to ensure the quality, accuracy and comprehension of the translations in New York and California. APIAHF participated in planning meetings and outreach efforts to increase the response rate among AANHPIs. Many of the organizations that APIAHF partnered with became official census information centers in 2000. APIAHF served on the CIC steering committee from 2000-2004, serving as chair from 2001-2003.

In addition, APIAHF is a member of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), a coalition of 21 organizations nation wide. Based in Washington, DC, “NCAPA serves to represent the interests of the greater APA community and to provide a national voice for APA issues.”³

APIAHF is pleased to provide these comments related to the Census Bureau’s recruitment, training and hiring strategies for the 2010 Census.

Leadership

We are very concerned about the resignations of Director Louis Kincannon and Deputy Director Hermann Habermann at the same time last Fall. These positions must be filled as soon as possible as they impact the on-going preparations for the 2010 Census. The position of Director needs to be filled by someone who is a skilled statistician with superior management expertise and experience, especially with respect to the operational components of the decennial Census, the American Community Survey, and other activities of the Bureau. The Director needs to be someone who will be able to work during the change in Administration that will be occurring before the 2010 Census to ensure that preparations are not disrupted. Policies and allocation of resources are directed from the leadership of the Census Bureau and the Department of Commerce. Related to the hiring, recruitment and training for the 2010 Census, the leadership of the Census Bureau needs to consider the policies and leadership needed to ensure that historically undercounted minority and immigrant communities are targeted for Census outreach and that it employs individuals from these communities at all levels of the Census Bureau from the leadership to the local level.

The Census Bureau should establish national staff positions to act as liaisons to the Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities as well as the other minority groups. Similar positions were created during the 2000 Census for Latinos, including a position that served as the primary liaison between the Bureau and the Latino community. The

³ See <http://www.ncapaonline.org/default1.asp> for more information and list of members.

Census Bureau also hired a Latino media specialist and marketing staff who could respond to concerns of the Latino community. Providing similar positions for other minority communities including Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders would assist in making the Bureau's outreach, recruitment, and hiring strategies more effective and coordinated. The Census Bureau should be commended for establishing the Racial and Ethnic Advisory Committees (REAC). The Advisory Committees for the Asian American population and the Native and Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations are extremely useful in establishing a relationship and mechanism for these communities to interact with the Bureau and share information.

The Census Bureau needs to ensure that the communications contractor for the 2010 Census includes ethnic media outlets and subcontracts with community-based organizations, small businesses and individuals experienced in outreach to diverse racial and ethnic communities for recruitment and hiring of Census personnel for the 2010 Census in addition to outreach to promote a complete count. Director Kincannon stated his intention to incorporate the lessons and successes of Census 2000, which included both paid advertising and reliance on partnerships. The communications plan must include paid advertising in ethnic media outlets and partnerships with community and faith-based organizations and individuals who are leaders in minority communities including Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander small businesses.

The Census Bureau should immediately request a waiver from the Office of Personnel Management to allow the hiring of work-authorized noncitizens to meet the need for bilingual personnel. During the 2000 Census, the Census Bureau Regional Offices hired Community Partnership Specialists who targeted specific racial and ethnic communities for outreach. This proved to be an effective way to conduct outreach to these communities. However, the efforts to hire sufficient bilingual personnel were frustrated by the confusion about the Bureau's policy concerning the hiring of noncitizens. The Census Bureau had a policy of only hiring citizens until July of 1999. At that time the Bureau announced that it would waive the citizenship requirement and reproduce all its recruitment materials to include the change.⁴ However, a provision in the Commerce Department's 1999 appropriations legislation restricted the Bureau to hiring noncitizens from Allied nations on a list produced by the State Department.⁵ The non-Allied list included India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and other countries in the Middle East. The law allowed some exemptions including hiring of noncitizens from non-Allied nations for jobs requiring bilingual ability.

Not until January 2000 did the Bureau issued a directive to its regional offices that work-authorized noncitizens from any country could be hired as long as they had the necessary bilingual skills. However, because of misunderstanding about the policy among the regional offices and the discretion of individual managers, there were reported many inconsistent and arbitrary applications of the policy. For example, in March, following the issuance of the directive, one New York Asian American civil rights organization reported that Indian, Pakistani noncitizens who passed the test for employment were declared ineligible after the computer

⁴ 2000 Decennial Regional Census Center Administrative Memorandum No. 99-113 (July 23, 1999).

⁵ PL 105-277, Section 606.

rejected them due to their country of origin.⁶ Asian American community organizations also found advertisements for census enumerators that included citizenship requirements. The Bureau's policy needs to be established from the beginning of the recruiting and hiring process and communicated to all the regional and local census offices. In addition, advertising of positions such as enumerators and telephone questionnaire assistance operators should include clear statements that noncitizens with work authorization and skills in languages other than English are encouraged to apply.

The Census Bureau should ensure that the tests required to be taken by applicants for census jobs are translated into the primary languages spoken most frequently by limited-English proficient persons in the United States, taking into account regional needs for specific languages. Many potential applicants for census jobs could not take the test because it was only available in English and Spanish. A significant number of Asian Americans are limited-English proficient. More than a third of Asian Americans and 12 percent of Pacific Islanders reported that they speak English less than very well on the 2000 Census. A majority of six Asian American groups speak English less than very well including Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian, Lao, Bangladeshi and Taiwanese. Over 25 percent of Tongans and Fijians reported speaking English less than very well.⁷ Providing tests in languages spoken by significant numbers of limited English proficient individuals and in languages spoken in specific communities with high percentages of LEP persons will increase the pool of qualified persons with language skills to address the needs of hard-to-count communities.

Assessment and Planning

In order to ensure a diverse and culturally competent workforce that will help the Census Bureau's goal of achieving a complete and accurate count of all persons in the U.S., the Bureau should conduct an assessment of its needs and resources and develop a plan that includes strategies to recruit a workforce to meet those needs. The Bureau should consider the demographics of the populations most undercounted in the 2000 Census and the demographics of each community. When considering the demographics of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, it is important to look at whether specific ethnic subgroups were undercounted. Looking at whether Asian Americans were undercounted as a group masks the fact that many subgroups were undercounted while some subgroups were not. Consulting with the REAC and national AANHPI and other minority serving organizations can help identify which communities are likely to be undercounted if resources dedicated to outreach are not specifically directed to their community. The Bureau should assess its current workforce including racial and ethnic diversity and proficiency in languages other than English. The analysis needs to disaggregate Asian Americans from Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Standard on the Collection of Data on Race and Ethnicity, and if practicable, also identify the needs of specific ethnic groups within the aggregated racial category. According to the Bureau's Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO), Asian Americans currently comprise 3.23 percent of the Census

⁶ See Asian Pacific Americans and Census 2000: Findings and Recommendations for Census 2000, Asian American Justice Center, September 2001.

⁷ Asian American Justice Center and Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2006.

Bureau's total workforce.⁸ We support the Asian Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Bureau focus on recruitment, retention, management opportunities and promotion of qualified Asian candidates, particularly at grade levels 14, 15, and SES. A recruitment and hiring plan should be developed, in consultation with the REAC, that takes into account the needs and current resources of each region and identify local community partners to help identify the most effective ways to reach qualified individuals from the targeted communities. A senior official within each regional office should be assigned to ensure that the appropriate recruitment and targeting is occurring and to monitor the implementation of the hiring and recruitment plan.

Community Partnerships

Community partnership is essential in the development of outreach and recruitment plans, and the Census Bureau needs to begin these partnerships now. In response to a recommendation from the Census Advisory Committee on the Asian Population, the Bureau said that it planned to hire Partnership and Data Services Specialists in the 12 regional offices to build partnerships and conduct outreach and promotional activities in support of the 2010 Census. The Bureau noted that while the program is designed to reach all segments of the population, special emphasis is placed on working with many different racial and ethnic groups, hard-to-count, and hard-to-reach populations and acknowledged that the best way to reach these populations is through trusted organizations and individuals.⁹ It is therefore critical that the persons hired for these positions have the experience and expertise in reaching one or more of these communities and the ability to identify the partnerships needed to reach other communities. The specialists need to be able to assess the best ways to reach a diversity of communities including whether face-to-face contact by trusted community members is the most effective. The Partnership and Data Services Specialists should also have knowledge of and develop partnerships with ethnic media outlets.

Director Kincannon testified that an important component of the Bureau's language assistance program will be recruiting locally for temporary workers.¹⁰ Given the diversity of communities that the Census must reach and the need to identify the diversity of ways to reach them, this component is crucial for ensuring that the Census Bureau uses workers who have the trust and local knowledge of the communities in which they live. Community partners such as community-based and faith-based organizations as well as individual government leaders, school leaders, religious leaders, union leaders, community activists and other kinds of community leaders will be an obvious source of assistance to communicate with their constituents not only about the importance of completing the census information, but to recruit individuals for temporary jobs with the Census. The Census Bureau should consider contracting with community and faith-based organizations and small businesses to assist with these efforts including those representing AANHPI and other minority communities.

⁸ See Recommendations of the Census Advisory Committee on the Asian Population Made as a Result of Meeting on April 27-28, 2006, Census Bureau Response to Recommendation 5.

⁹ See Recommendations of the Census Advisory Committee on the Asian Population Made as a Result of Meeting on April 27-28, 2006, Census Bureau Response to Recommendation 3.

¹⁰ Hearing on Economic and Statistics Administration, Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies of the H. Comm. On Appropriations, 110th Congress, March 7, 2007 (testimony of Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon).

The experience of Census 2000 demonstrates how establishing partnerships with communities that are harder to count reduces non-response follow-up costs and improves accuracy. The local recruitment is particularly needed for hard-to-reach Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. AANHPI communities are concentrated in specific regions and states. Asian Americans continue to be concentrated in the Western states. However, within each racial group there are different areas of concentration for individual ethnic subgroups. For example, 68% of Filipinos live in the West, while South Asians are concentrated in the Northeast, and there are significant Hmong and Laotian populations in the Midwest. Pacific Islanders are found in areas around San Francisco, Southern California and Utah. In addition, there are emerging AANHPI communities in areas that may not have established community-based organizations or other institutions that serve these communities. There has been a rapid growth of Asian Americans in Nevada, Georgia and North Carolina. Washington, Utah and Texas has the highest rate of growth of Pacific Islanders.¹¹ In some of these emerging communities, the Census Bureau will need to use local contacts to identify appropriate individual community leaders. Since these leaders are not always easily identifiable, it is even more imperative that the Census Bureau start doing its homework and making contact with national and local organizations that may be able to assist.

Adequate Resources

We support robust funding of the Community Partnership program starting in Fiscal Year 08 to ensure that the Census Bureau's recruitment and hiring goals are met. The Census Bureau acknowledges the value of a strong partnership program.¹² However, it has not provided a specific plan, other than to say that it will be addressed in Fiscal Year 09. There are no plans to increase the funding for partnership workers in the regions in Fiscal Year 08. There is no funding for the partnership program in Fiscal Year 2008. Waiting until Fiscal Year 09 is unacceptable as the relationships that need to be built need to be created immediately in order to have the most successful recruitment and hiring of local workers. Director Kincannon testified that the Census Bureau had in fact requested \$18 million for the partnership program in Fiscal Year 08 from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), but that OMB zeroed out that request. Therefore, no request for funding the partnership program was included in the President's budget. The House Appropriations bill on Commerce, Justice, Science includes \$13 million to support partnership and outreach efforts in preparation for the 2010 Census. The report language designates that the funds should be used to hire additional personnel who have experience in developing partnerships for the 2010 census, provide other support for Regional Partnership and Data Services Programs, and not less than \$1,000,000 for a national partnership program administered from Census headquarters. We are disappointed that no funds were included for the partnership program in the Senate bill. Advance planning is necessary for an effective partnership and outreach program. The Census Bureau will particularly need time to

¹¹ Asian American Justice Center and Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2006.

¹² “[The Census Bureau] firmly and profoundly believe[s] that the partnership program in the regions helped us get a better census, which we did have in 2000. And even the normally hard nosed GAO and the IG and the Commerce Department shared that opinion even though they could not put out the facts that said this activity has resulted in three-thirds of an increase and response rate. So the opinion is universal that it is valuable.” Hearing on Economic and Statistics Administration, Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Before the Subcomm. on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies of the H. Comm. on Appropriations, 110th Congress, March 7, 2007 (testimony of Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon).

identify appropriate partners in communities with emerging immigrant populations and to recruit, hire and train the partnership specialists. Even in communities with a history of community partnerships with the Census Bureau, local organizations and leaders will need time to gear up their campaigns and seek other support from private and public foundations and state and local governments.

Conclusion

On behalf of the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, I want to thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide a written statement on the Census Bureau's preparations for the 2010 Decennial Census. While the Census Bureau has built a basis for an improved count in 2010 from its experience in 2000, it needs to step up immediately to address the changing demographics and environment of fear and mistrust of government that will jeopardize the goal of full participation by all Americans.