



**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
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Plans for the 2010 Census: Progress on FDCA and DRIS

**Before the Information Policy, Census, and National Archives Subcommittee
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**

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On behalf of the U.S. Census Bureau, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and the members of the Committee for this opportunity to discuss our plans for the 2010 Decennial Census. We would like to thank the Congress, particularly the members of this Committee, for their support of the Census Bureau. Your continued support will enable us to undertake a complete and accurate census.

I'm pleased to be joined by Deputy Director Jay Waite today. He will be bringing you up to date on the Data Response Integration System, and the rest of our 2010 Census programs. I am going to focus my remarks on the Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) program.

The FDCA program was originally designed to supply the information technology infrastructure, support services, hardware and software to support a network of over 450 local offices and hand-held computers (HHCs) that will be used around the country. It is helpful to think of FDCA as being made up of four fundamental components:

1. Automated data collection using handheld devices to verify addresses, called Address Canvassing or AdCan.
2. Automated data collection from respondents who failed to return the mail questionnaire, referred to as nonresponse follow-up, or NRFU.

3. The Operations Control System (OCS) that tracks and manages Decennial Census workflow; and
4. Census Operations Infrastructure, which provides office automation and support for Regional and Local Census Offices.

In late November 2007, as a result of concerns raised regarding the ability to meet deadlines and budgets, the Deputy Director of the Census Bureau initiated a comprehensive assessment to determine the status of the program and to better understand any issues or concerns as the program approaches key 2010 Census milestones. This assessment included a series of wide-ranging meetings with Census Bureau staff directly involved in the FDCA program. The Deputy Director also met with Harris Corporation, the company developing the FDCA system, and Mitre Corporation, an information technology firm under contract with the Census Bureau. Mitre's role is to provide an internal, independent assessment of the information technology systems in the decennial programs and also IT systems in the bureau.

An Integrated Program Team (IPT) made up of key, high ranking 2010 Census managers, was established and tasked with producing the final set of FDCA program requirements by January 16, 2008. This process was nearing completion when I arrived in early January. When Harris Corporation provided feedback at the end of January, the full scope of our problem came into focus.

This process identified issues that raised concerns about the ability to complete development of all of the operations initially planned for the FDCA system in time for the 2010 Census. These included:

HHC Functionality -- Assessments of the Address Canvassing operation for the 2008 Dress Rehearsal revealed that there were difficulties in obtaining efficient transmission to and from the hand-held computer, resulting in enumerator downtime. In addition, the HHCs did not function well if the number of addresses in the enumerator assignment area was too large.

OCS Requirements -- The sheer volume of requirements, as well as the complexity of the operations that FDCA supports, contribute to problems that are particularly significant in the development of the OCS. Contract deliverables in the fall indicated that problems remained despite steps taken to clarify and strengthen the process we use to define contract requirements.

We now understand that the problem with the FDCA program was due in part to a lack of effective communication between the Census Bureau and the prime contractor for FDCA, and to difficulties in developing the full scope of the project within deadlines. We did not effectively convey to the contractor the complexity of census operations, and the detailed requirements that needed to be fulfilled in order to complete the operations that FDCA covers. Once these detailed requirements were completely delineated, we had serious concerns about rising costs and our ability to complete a successful 2010 Census if we continued developing the FDCA program as planned.

As we grappled with this problem, I established a task force, chaired by former Census Bureau Deputy Director William Barron and made up of some of the Census Bureau's and the Department's best people, as well as representatives from MITRE, to help us develop a strategy for moving forward.

The task force outlined four options for moving forward. All of these options called for using the handheld computers for Address Canvassing, and we are continuing to work to ensure this requirement is met. For the other major components of FDCA each of the options considered a combination of responsibilities between Harris and Census in terms of capabilities, expertise, staffing, timing and costs.

The work of the task force was reviewed by an Expert Panel established by the Secretary and made up of two former Census Bureau Directors, a former Associate Director of the Census Bureau, information technology experts, and a former Member of Congress.

After receiving input from the Expert Panel members, the Secretary decided that we should move to a paper-based NRFU operation. This is a decision I fully support. The Census Bureau will implement NRFU and take responsibility for the Regional Census Center infrastructure. Our contractor will continue developing the Address Canvassing operation utilizing the handheld computers and develop the Operations Control System. This option increases our control of 2010 Census systems development. The Census Bureau knows how to develop and implement a paper-based NRFU, and our decision to do so again gives us flexibility and minimizes the risks we identified in the FDCA program. At the same time, the plan allows us to leverage Global Positioning System technologies by using handheld computers in the Address Canvassing operation. This will improve the accuracy of our address list, which is fundamental to an accurate census.

Since becoming Director in January, addressing the problems associated with the FDCA program has been my highest priority. With the replan outlined today, I am confident we can put the 2010 Census back on track.

Thank you for this opportunity. I am happy to answer any of your questions.