

Opening Statement of Dr. Bernie Miller
Chairman, U.S. Census Bureau's African American Advisory Committee
Appearing Before the Sub-Committee on Information Policy,
Census, and National Archives
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Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Turner, and other distinguish members of the subcommittee. My name is Bernie Miller. I'm the pastor of New Covenant Fellowship Church in Chattanooga, TN as well as the Chairman of the Census Bureau's African American Advisory Committee.

I am honored to have an opportunity to testify before the Sub-committee on Information Policy, Census, and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on the critical issue related to the challenges and the opportunities that we face implementing the Census Bureau's recruitment, training and hiring strategies for the 2010 Census that promotes the development and advancement of minorities within the U.S. Census Bureau.

Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II, earned a reputation as the king of the verbal comeback. He loved verbally sparring with his main political adversary, Lady Astor. On one occasion, Lady Astor told Churchill, "Sir, if I were your wife, I'd put arsenic in your tea." to which Churchill responded, "Lady Astor, if I were your husband, I would drink it."

No one was armed with a better comeback then the Census Bureau's Director, Mr. Louis Kinacannon. At our 2007 May meeting, I personally asked Mr. Kincannon why wasn't Marvin Raines' position, associate director of field operations, filled with another African American? His comeback was, "There were no qualified blacks available." His comeback was shocking and incomprehensible. Why are there no qualified blacks? The Bureau prides itself in its recruiting abilities. If no one is qualified to fill the lowest level senior position, who's fault is it? Who's responsible for preparing the workforce for these openings?

If the bureau wanted to fill vacancies with qualified blacks, they need not look any further than from within. Inside the bureau there are twenty-five blacks classified as GS15 employees. There are 186 male and 390 female employees in the GS7-12 category. If the bureau needed to go outside of its walls, they should have looked in their very own community, Prince George County; a county Ebony Magazine called "America's wealthiest black country."

"The county" wrote, Kevin Chappell, "ranks in the top 2 percent in the nation in income level, and in people who are employed in executive jobs. Two-thirds of its work force are in white-collar professions, many of whom have plunked down huge sums of money to live in the county where the average price for a new home is more than \$700,000, with many fetching more than \$1 million."

The truth is, the bureau has a vast pool of qualified blacks that they could have easily elevated from within, but instead, the bureau chose a Hispanic from the Department of Interior who had not been at the bureau in ten years.

There's an old saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way." The bureau has a way to effortlessly solve the disparity problem, but I wonder if they really have the will?

I applaud the Bureau for having an African American in charge of the Bureau's facilities. I applaud the Bureau for having an African American in charge of human resources. I applaud the Bureau for having an African American in charge of budgets. These are great support positions, but unfortunately, these heads have no say in what goes on in the major program areas of the Census, such as the 2010 Decennial, the ACS or the Community Partnerships demographics, and economics. There are currently no blacks in leadership positions in those areas.

The lack of African Americans representing the interests and concerns of our community in these decision-making positions at the Census Bureau has long-term consequences for the quality of life of our population. The implications of this situation are much larger than quotas or racial balance and are the benchmark by which all discussions, decisions and policies are made that will impact our people for decades.

The need for the recruitment and promotion of minorities into decision-making roles, outreach, as well as the need for contracting opportunities that help small black owned businesses was raised at our 2004, 2005, 2006 and again at our 2007 spring meeting in May. Like Winston Churchill, the bureau has always been armed with a quick comeback.

In 2004 we recommended that the bureau “Formalize and Expand the Recruitment Program with HBCUs”

“We recommend that U.S. Census Bureau formalize and expand its recruitment program with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), through dedicated staff and resources for students to participate in career and other employment and academic opportunities, facilitating the Bureau’s diversity mandate.”

Census Bureau Response

The Census Bureau has developed a Strategic Recruitment Plan with the principal objective of aligning all critical hiring and employment initiatives to support Enabling Goal 5 of the Census Bureau's Strategic Plan: **Maintain a highly qualified and motivated work force**. The initiatives developed to facilitate this alignment address a series of objectives identified as critical to recruitment and retention. Several of the objectives most relevant to diversity are the following:

- Recruit, inspire, manage, and retain a highly qualified, diverse work force at entry, mid-career, and senior levels.
- Address unique challenges related to recruiting, supporting, and communicating with underrepresented minorities.
- Focus on internal workplace diversity through respect and tolerance for social, ethnic, and racial differences.

Several of the Census Bureau's work force diversity initiatives include building upon our established recruitment programs at select HBCUs.

In broadening diversity within the accounting and financial management programs at Census Headquarters, for example, the Census Bureau will continue to aggressively recruit the most talented accounting majors from a defined list of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) for internships at Census Headquarters with the possibility of permanent placement upon graduation. The defined list of seven MSIs includes two HBCUs—Howard University and North Carolina A&T University.

Since 1998, the Census Bureau has fostered a relationship with Norfolk State University (NSU) to introduce and attract African American students to opportunities at the Census Bureau. We provided a liaison to represent the Bureau at its annual cluster meetings, introduced our data by providing CD-ROMs for their library, and hired several students as permanent employees. As

we further develop this relationship with the university, we expect to identify and place NSU students into our summer intern program, STEP, and Student Cooperative Education Program.

To ensure that our outreach efforts to HBCUs are sustained as we recruit across occupations, we have a dedicated resource assigned as the African American Employment Coordinator in the Recruitment and Diversity Branch of the Human Resources Division who works with targeted HBCUs to facilitate recruitment and hiring efforts and to increase the visibility of the Census Bureau on campus.

The bureau's comeback was elaborate, but diversity in critical programming areas of the bureau is still non-existent. They have devised a great Strategic Plan that calls for maintaining a highly qualified and motivated work force.

Unfortunately, many blacks are not motivated to apply for various executive level positions because the perception is, they will not be seriously considered.

There's a saying, "Cream rises to the top." Regrettably, at the Census Bureau, the "cream of the crop" African American employees aren't rising as fast or as far as their white and Hispanic counterparts. There seems to be a glass ceiling.

The bureau also stated that it wanted to "Recruit, inspire, manage, and retain a highly qualified, diverse work force at entry, mid-career, and senior levels." If that's true, why didn't they find a black to replace Mr. Raines? *W.H. Auden* said,

"Civilizations should be measured by "the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained." If this trend should continue, it will be the first time in four decades that there has not been a black senior executive/manager retained at this level.

That's why our committee is very passionate about this issue. 36.4 million people, who reported themselves as Black or African American, and the 1.8 million who reported themselves as Black in combination with one or more other races are depending on our committee to advise the U.S. Census Bureau on ways to reduce the differential undercount of hard-to-enumerate populations within the African American community.

To achieve this objective, we strongly suggest that the bureau promote and/or hire qualified African Americans in decision-making positions in the following areas:

- 1) The Community Partnerships Program;
- 2) Senior executive/manager on the 2010 Decennial, and;
- 3) ACS (American Community Survey) staffs.

There was a significant and unexplainable 700,000 undercount of African Americans in the 2000 Census, and that was with a sufficiently staffed Census. Today, the number of blacks working in those same strategic areas as in the 2000 census staff has decreased. The undercount may be greater in the 2010

Decennial due to an inadequate number of African Americans employed in these decision-making positions.

As a nation, we are blessed with ethnic diversity. According to the U.S. Census 2003 report, there are approximately 3.5 million foreign born from the Caribbean region living in the U.S. Additionally, there are several languages spoken in this region, Haitian Creole being the predominant language after English. Without an African American in a decision-making position on the Community Partnerships, or the 2010 Decennial or the ACS staff, many of these individuals, I'm afraid will fall be undercounted. It is imperative that the bureau hires and train enumerators from within these hard-to-count communities. As you well know, an incorrect count has an adverse impact on the amount of federal dollars each state, county and city receives from the federal government as well as congressional redistricting.

The bureau has always had a quick comeback when asked about personnel matters as well as recommendations for them to explain their outreach philosophy.

At our 2005 REAC meeting, we recommended the bureau: Provide Census 2000 Contract Agreements/Rules and also Evaluations/Studies on Advertisement and Outreach/Provide Decision-making Dates for Census 2010

“The Census Advisory Committee on African American Population is interested in business opportunities for minority advertising firms in the 2010 Census. We recommend the Census Bureau do the following:

- a. Present the REAC with a complete review of the contractual agreements regarding the advertisement and outreach campaign for the 2000 Census. It is important that the information provided REAC not only include the large master contract, but the Bureau’s knowledge of how the contract was broken down to subcontractors hired by the lead agency or the Bureau itself. It would also be helpful to review the RFP including any special stipulations that may have been given to lead contractors regarding minority subcontracting. The African American Advisory Committee is particularly interested in the Bureau’s thoughts on the appropriateness of lead contractors subcontracting with subsidiaries of its own corporation.
- b. Present the REAC with a review of what rules/laws the Bureau had to follow regarding minority contracting for the 2000 Census and any changes to these rules or laws for Census 2010.
- c. Present the REAC with all studies and evaluations of the Census 2000 advertising and outreach campaign.
- d. Present the REAC with a calendar of important dates and decision making points regarding advertising for 2010 Census.”

Census Bureau Response

The Decennial Management Division's Communications Research and Development Group are drafting a plan for 2010 outreach and promotions activities. When the plan is finalized, it will be shared with the African American and other Race and Ethnic Advisory Committees. Businesses and agencies should monitor FedBizOpps at the following Web site: www.fedbizopps.gov. FedBizOpps is the government point-of-entry for federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. The Census Bureau will provide more details at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Our committee is still waiting on the bureau to provide us with those details.

At our April 27-28, 2006 meeting, we recommended the bureau: Grant Multiple Awards for the Advertising Contracts/Identify Minority-Owned Businesses

Census Bureau Response

The 2010 Census Communications Acquisition Team explored the possibility of awarding multiple contracts for the communications contract, examining the experiences of other federal agencies with large communications campaigns, as well as the communications vendors we met with during the market research phase. The team concluded from this research that it would not be feasible for the Census Bureau to serve as an integrator of separate contracts for various components of such a time-sensitive campaign (i.e., public relations, advertising, multimedia, interactive marketing, etc.). The projected tasks are so integrally

related, and the administrative/contracting burden so complex, that only a single prime contractor with expertise in carrying out such projects will be able to ensure a timely delivery of the campaign. The Census Bureau has decided that including the integration activities as a requirement of the contract, to be performed by a firm with the required knowledge, expertise, and staffing to pull together the different components, would make for a more concordant and seamlessly integrated campaign. The Census Bureau will rely on the expertise of a prime contractor with demonstrated experience integrating projects that are similar in size, scope, and complexity to the 2010 Census Communications campaign. The Census Bureau understands from the Census 2000 advertising contract and current market research activities, the value of using firms with demonstrated experience in communicating to minority populations. The Census Bureau will include evaluation criteria in the upcoming Request for Proposal (RFP) to compel interested prime contractors to develop value-added subcontracting relationships with companies with expertise in reaching minority populations. During the mark Congressional research phase we used the Department of Commerce' (DOC) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) trade magazines and the Internet to identify minority-owned firms that may have an interest in the campaign. The Acquisition Division will add the NMSDC and Black Enterprise' BE 100 to our resource list for future mass communications for the 2010 Communications Campaign.

Once again, the bureau has another great comeback, but no real concerted effort to solve the problem of the lack of diversity and participation by minority contractors. In light of diversity, even when we work hard to expand our awareness, we may still not see the full picture. There is always more to learn.

Maya Angelou said, "We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color."

I see the Census Bureau as a strong piece of cloth with each individual employee, division chief, associate director, deputy and director representing the threads of that cloth. These threads are fine and beautiful but individually they are easily broken, however when woven together properly they become many times stronger than that of each standing alone. I see this cloth as a beautiful, multicolored tapestry made up of threads of all types.

I believe it is the job of the chairs of the congressional subcommittees to become weavers of these threads; in order to build a Census that's built on consensus at all levels.

Mr. Chairman, these issues are of grave concern to our committee and I thank you, on behalf of the African American Advisory Committee, for holding these hearings so that our committee's concerns can be heard and recorded into the Congressional record.

I sincerely hope that a decision will be made soon to correct the lack of participation from African Americans in decision-making positions on the 2010 Decennial, ACS and the Community Partnerships staffs. We have been waiting far too long. "For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" wrote the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "wait" has almost always meant "never." It has been tranquilizing

Thalidomide, relieving the emotional stress for a moment, only to give birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration.”

Many blacks at the bureau have been waiting for more than 30 years for an opportunity to rise to a senior executive level position. “I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait” said Dr. King.

“This is not a time for passivity or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.” Alai Stevenson said, “On the Plains of hesitation bleach the bones of countless millions who, at the dawn of victory, sat down to wait, and waiting died.”

To coin another phrase from Dr. King, “The sweltering summer of the African American’s legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.