



**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
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Critical Operations of the 2010 Census – Status Update

**Before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives
U.S. House of Representatives**

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Sub-Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to report on the Census Bureau's preparations for the 2010 Census. The Census is upon us. April 1, 2010 is only 392 days from today, and I can report that we are well on our way toward a successful enumeration. Today, I will provide an update on the early operations that are now underway and an overview of our testing efforts for the broad array of systems in place to support the collection, integration and tabulation of census data.

A complete and accurate address list is the cornerstone of a successful Census. Throughout the decade we regularly updated the Address List we used in Census 2000 with records from the U.S. Postal Service. Then, in 2007, we invited Tribal, State and Local Governments to review our address lists for accuracy and completeness during the Local Update of Census Addresses Program, what we call LUCA. 11,500 governments registered for LUCA, and 8,188 provided feedback. As a result, we have identified 8 million addresses that have been added to our address list development operation.

We are now training staff for the Address Canvassing operation, the first major operation in the 2010 Census. During Address Canvassing 140,000 Census Bureau employees will walk every street in America checking 145 million addresses and updating the 2010 Census address list. The Address Canvassing operation runs from March 30 – July 17, 2009. Then, in late September, Census employees will validate the listings for what we call Group Quarters, which include dormitories, group homes, prisons, and the like. This is the first time that Group Quarters are part of Address Canvassing, and their inclusion

will improve the accuracy and coverage of the final count. I am pleased to report we are on schedule. Nearly 150 Early-opening Local Census Offices are now open for business, and we have a pool of over 900,000 applicants that we will draw from to field the needed workforce.

Our address listers will be verifying and updating the Address List using handheld computers to capture GPS coordinates for most of the housing units in the country. In December 2008, we conducted the Address Canvassing Operational Field Test. The test provided an opportunity for our field staff to test for a second time key functionality of the handheld computers in an environment that approximates a real census. Our Regional Directors, the Census officials responsible for the program, participated in the test, and the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) joined the field staff as observers. We were pleased and encouraged by the feedback from listers and observers. The test results confirmed that significant improvements have been made since the Dress Rehearsal and reinforced our confidence in the readiness of the system as we prepare to implement the operation next month.

As you know, the Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) Program, which includes the handheld computers and the systems that support them, presented enormous developmental challenges last year. In April 2008, after extended consultations with former Census Bureau officials, current staff, and experts from the private sector, the Secretary announced the decision to address these challenges by re-planning our field operations and abandoned the use of handhelds to electronically capture information from households that do not return forms. We call this operation Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU), and we will use paper-based methods to collect information from non-respondents as we have in prior censuses.

Throughout the summer we worked intensely with our contractor to continue development of the FDCA program and determine the correct delineation of responsibilities. We identified concerns about the progress of what we call the Operations Control System (OCS) for our paper-based operations. These paper-based operations include the NRFU interviews, operations in rural areas where we leave a form for households to mail back, interviews with Group Quarters, and enumeration activities at transient locations like campgrounds. The OCS encompasses the software and systems that form the nerve center for 494 field offices. It is used to define enumerator assignments, and to monitor and report on enumerator productivity. To address these concerns we made the decision in October 2008 for the Census Bureau to assume responsibility for the development of this component of the FDCA program as well. Field enumerators will be conducting a wide range of information gathering activities central to the 2010 Census. We rely on the OCS and need to be sure it is in place and functioning effectively as field operations begin. Assuming responsibility for its development was the best way to ensure this.

It is important to stress that the decisions to move to a paper-based NRFU, and to take control of the development of the OCS, were made to *reduce* the risk of system or operational failure because we have successfully done these things before and are confident in our ability to do them again.

GAO draws appropriate attention to the need for a rigorous and complete testing program. We agree with GAO that a comprehensive testing program is required. Since the initial re-plan in April 2008, we have focused on the things we have not done before to demonstrate to our own satisfaction that the new software and systems will work in production. We worked over the summer to develop a testing inventory and conduct a gap analysis. We then introduced testing metrics into the program management reviews regularly conducted for each operation. We also established a testing officer.

At the end of January 2009 we completed the development testing and production schedule for the OCS for paper-based operations. All 2010 Census systems and interfaces will be tested before operations are in the field. This is a rigorous testing strategy, the effectiveness of which is reflected in our response to the report on our testing plans issued by GAO this week. GAO made 9 recommendations in their draft report outlining 28 specific steps that should be taken to strengthen our testing program. We agree with GAO's recommendations. Moreover, we have already completed 16 of the steps they specify, and 8 others are planned. We believe that of the remaining 4, 2 are pre-mature and 2 will require more discussion with GAO.

We also are taking important steps to address concerns raised by GAO about our cost estimates. We will capture actual costs for all FY 2010 Census operations on an ongoing basis, and provide better analysis and documentation of the assumptions and cost factors that impact our estimates. We appreciate GAO's recommendations concerning our cost estimation procedures, and we will work with them to implement action plans to address them.

When the Census Bureau appeared before the Congress a year ago to discuss the problems we identified with the FDCA program, all of us – Congress, GAO, former Census officials, and representatives from the private sector – recognized that the 2010 Census was at great risk. Since then we worked closely with Congress, GAO, MITRE, and experts from the private sector to re-scope the FDCA program and to re-define the developmental responsibilities for the systems supporting Field operations. The program I just outlined reflects the progress of our combined efforts.

In closing let me stress that the Census Bureau is on solid ground as the 2010 Census begins. We believe that our current plan has significantly reduced the risk to the 2010 Census, and we are poised to meet the enormous challenges in front of us. Members of the Sub-Committee, the Census Bureau is on track for a successful Census. I am happy to take your questions.