

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

A Brookings Urban Markets Initiative Briefing

"WHAT WILL A CUT IN U.S. CENSUS BUREAU FUNDING MEAN
FOR AMERICA'S CITIES?"

Investigating the Importance of Supporting
Federal Information Programs to Urban America

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. SABETY: [In progress.]--program. Bruce Katz was unable to join us today. But he does send his greetings.

Today marks the first briefing that the Urban Markets Initiative has put together around Census budget issues in our ongoing effort to understand and better portray the importance of good information to drive change in investment in America's cities and in our urban markets.

Today, we have a terrific panel made up of folks that come from a variety of different disciplines that understand the tremendous importance of good information like that produced by the Census Bureau to think through policy issues to spur economic development and investment in new technologies and jobs, and to deal with things like the disaster response that we saw around Hurricane Katrina.

So we have a terrific panel. I'm going to let Andy Reamer, who is the Deputy Director of the Urban Markets Initiative, take on the panel from here. But thank you very much for being here and welcome.

Andy?

MR. REAMER: Thanks, Pari. Good morning, everybody. Today we're going to talk about the impact of pending Census budget cuts and what that means for America's cities. The premise of the Urban Markets Initiative is that information drives markets; that public and private decision makers need good information to make intelligent investment decisions in urban areas.

The Census Bureau is the single most important provider of information for urban decision makers. The Census Bureau provides population counts--how many

people live in various neighborhoods, cities, metropolitan areas, states. It provides population characteristics--their income, their primary language, educational attainment, how they get to work. Do they own a car?

Census Bureau provides information about population conditions--how many people are unemployed, how many people are in poverty, how many people lack health insurance, how many people are in decent housing, and how much they pay for decent housing.

The Census Bureau provides information on workforce profiles--in a given area, how many people are in what occupations, how much do they make, what's their educational level, and what's their gender, race and ethnicity.

The Census Bureau provides information on profiles of businesses in a given area, down to a zip code level--how many establishments are there, how many people they employ, how big those establishments are, and how large a payroll they have.

All these statistics on people, on workforce, on businesses are relied on by thousands, if not tens of thousands, of public and private decision makers on a daily basis.

Businesses use these statistics to identify potential markets—to understand the purchasing power in an area; to identify possible workforce--who's available to staff these establishments; and to look at potential competition. State and local governments use Census statistics to ascertain the need for transportation infrastructure, employment, health clinics, housing and educational needs, and, as we saw recently, planning for and recovering from natural disasters.

And agencies across the federal government itself rely on the Census statistics to determine programming needs in all the realms I just mentioned—jobs, transportation, health, housing, education, disaster planning and recovery.

Over the past decade, the Census Bureau has made a concerted effort to improve the quantity and the quality of statistics as providing on urban areas--rural areas and urban areas, but of particular value to urban areas.

They're seeking to improve the accuracy of the 2010 Census. Doing a census is a difficult proposition, trying to cover every person in the country, and there are issues of missing certain people, undercounting; and issues of double counting--counting people twice. The Census Bureau has designed methodologies to reduce the undercount and the double counting that they hope to test and develop over the next few years in anticipation of the 2010 Census.

Over the past decade, the Census Bureau has created the American Community Survey, which aims to produce annually what has been a once-a-decade profile of characteristics of the population collected through the long form of the decennial census. We get long form data about two years after they're collected, and then they're soon out of date, and they're all we have for ten more years. The ACS would be publishing those data on an ongoing basis. This year, 2005, is the first full year of implementation of the ACS. So the ACS, as we'll hear from some of our speakers, is a highly valuable new edition to the Census statistics.

Over the last few years, the Census Bureau has been creating something with the unwieldy name of the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics program, or LEHD, an effort that takes existing administrative records from the unemployment

insurance system and allows people at a local level, at a county level, at a metro level, to understand the dynamics of the workforce—how many people are getting hired, how many people are getting laid off, by industry, by age, by sex. LEHD is a very, very powerful tool that's just starting to be used nationwide.

County Business Patterns is one of the longest standing employer profiles that we have, it's been around since the 1940s. In the last few years, the Census Bureau has added zip code-level jobs data, which are very valuable to planners in local economic and workforce development.

So this is what the Census Bureau has been up over the past decade.

We're now confronted with a situation in which the House and the Senate have come up with budgets that differ by \$85 million, the Senate bill is \$85 million below the House bill and actually below what the Congress appropriated a year ago for the Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau indicates, and there's a handout you should have, that if the Senate budget prevails, it will need to cut programs across the Census Bureau, including all those various improvements that I just mentioned--improvements in identifying the number and characteristics of people and jobholders. Census says it will need to eliminate the American Community Survey, and we've been told that they would reinstitute the long form in 2010, which would be very costly to do. The Bureau has spent three quarters of a billion dollars so far on the ACS, and to have to junk it now and to go back to a long form would be costly; would not serve users of statistics very well. And you might have read in the Washington Post this morning the Bureau is actually thinking perhaps it wouldn't even do a long form, if this budget goes through.

As I mentioned, every day thousands and thousands of private and public decision makers rely on Census data for investment decisions for urban areas.

The question before us in this briefing is: If the Senate budget prevails, what will Census program cuts mean for America's cities?

We have four terrific speakers today who will talk about their use of Census data and the impacts of potential budget cuts on their work and the people and the organizations that rely on their work.

I'm going to introduce all four speakers at once, and then we'll do a little Q&A after each speaker to get clarifying questions out of the way, and then we'll bring everyone up here afterwards for a wide open discussion.

We'll start with Denice Warren, who is coming to us from New Orleans via her temporary home in Phoenix, Arizona. Denice is the Information Systems Designer for the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, which is a local data intermediary. There are data intermediaries in metropolitan areas across the country that take Census data, data from states, data from local governments--multiple data sources on multiple topics--and weave them together to create a picture for local officials, businesses, and local residents about neighborhood characteristics.

Denice is going to talk to us about how the New Orleans Community Data Center has been relying on Census data pre-Katrina for understanding the neighborhoods of New Orleans and for helping to shape the delivery of social and community services, and post-Katrina--how these data have been important in disaster recovery.

Denice will be followed by Bill O'Hare from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, who directs the KIDS COUNT Program, which many of you are probably familiar with-- the KIDS COUNT initiative illuminates the wellbeing of children nationally and state-by-state through the publication of an annual data book, and it's really the most up-to-date set of statistics on children. KIDS COUNT relies very heavily on the American Community Survey.

Bill will be followed by Jim Eskew from Cushman & Wakefield, the nationally known real estate firm, where he's Assistant Director in the Client Solutions Group, and works with clients to help them identify the most appropriate places to locate their businesses around the globe, and in the U.S. Jim and his colleagues rely very much on Census statistics.

And finally, we'll hear from Bill Frey, who is a nationally, internationally known demographer based here at the Brookings Institution and also the University of Michigan.

I also want to recognize a couple of resources in the audience. When questions come up about the Census Bureau and about the budget process, we have Cindy Taeuber, who is formerly of the Census Bureau and was actively involved in the development of the American Community Survey, and I think named it. You did name it. Great. Because it had another unwieldy name before--yes, it did. We also have David McMillen, with the House Government Reform Committee, who is knowledgeable about the budget process. And Terri Ann, where are you? Terri Ann Lowenthal, who was with the House Census Subcommittee once upon a time in the '90s. Thank you.

Denice?

MS. WARREN:

Well, it's been almost seven weeks since we evacuated New Orleans, and being in this state of almost constant uncertainty, you can't help but think about all the things you used to take for granted. Things like being able to go home; having neighbors, childcare, electricity, safe water to drink. And so that's what I've been doing: slowly coming to terms with all of these small losses and large losses that myself and other people in New Orleans are facing. And last week, I got a call from the Brookings Institution, and they asked me to come to D.C. It snapped me out of my fog. And they said they wanted me to talk about what we were doing with Census data in New Orleans. And they explained that the Census Bureau was in danger of losing funding to continue the good changes they were making to the decennial census and that they wouldn't be able to roll out the American Community Survey as planned at Census if these budget cuts took place.

Well, like all bad news, it took a while to set in, and when it did, I realized that the Census was something else that I had been taking for granted. We'd been using Census 2000 data since it came out, and, sure, it was starting to show signs of age, but it was still good for doing what we needed to do in New Orleans. And we were really counting on the American Community Survey to come out so that we could get up to date small area demographics on New Orleans neighborhoods.

Well, now we need that American Community Survey even more; otherwise, during the long haul of rebuilding New Orleans, we're pretty much flying blind. We don't have any information to work from. And all of those cities, like

Houston and Atlanta and Baton Rouge, where our citizens have ended up, they don't have any good information on the demographics of the people who landed there, and won't be able to appropriately plan for or pay for the services those folks might need.

So what I'm going to do over the next few minutes is take you through a whirl-wind tour of how we were using data in New Orleans, and I hope you get a sense for the power of this level of detail of information for real-world decision making and what the potential for the American Community Survey is in giving us this data annually.

I'm going to start by talking a little bit about what we do as the local data intermediary. We don't collect primary data, and we're not a data warehouse. We don't collect all of the data available in the world about New Orleans. What we do instead is we hand pick select bits of information for use by local New Orleanians in different positions in non-profit agencies, assisting government and stuff, so that they can make the decisions that they need to make.

Our audience includes neighborhood groups, community-based organizations, non-profits, funders, and the city government.

Our theory of change is if everybody is looking at the same information to make decisions, we might be able to make some progress in tackling the problems that New Orleans has.

So when the data for Census 2000 was released, we republished that information on the web. And we organized the Census tract-level data from the Census long form into neighborhoods. And our neighborhoods--73 neighborhoods in New Orleans snap to Census tracts.

And we published the most relevant information for local decision making. And then we wove through that data just in time learning moments to help explain concepts like how poverty is defined in the Census and the difference between families and households.

Our audience--they're not experts in using data. They're experts at providing childcare and literacy services, running government, so we want to make using data as easy as possible for them.

Our website has a very simple architecture. In just three clicks you can get to the data you need, and I'm going to whiz down to the Lower 9th Ward, which you're all probably familiar with. This is our neighborhood page for the Lower 9th Ward neighborhood, and up there, at the top, you see there's a blurb and then a link to the neighborhood snapshot that has a historical narrative of the Lower 9th Ward, including photographs and stories about how things came to be there. And then, on the left hand side, we have a bunch of data tables--everything from people and housing and income, poverty, transportation, employment and stuff.

And I should say one of the beautiful things I think about the Census is that it's been easy for me to take ownership over it, and so I'll use the word "our" data a lot--I'll refer to our data, and it's actually the Census' data. But we've really taken it and made it our own here in New Orleans.

Now, I'm going to show you some data on people and household characteristics. What we do is we interrupt the data tables with explanations of how to use the data. And we recently, in 2003, we got some Technology Opportunities Program funding from the Department of Commerce to help people visualize differences between

neighborhoods, which, as you know is really essential in New Orleans, especially now. And what we did is we looked first at residential segregation. And if you look at this map, it's--the top graph is percent African Americans by block group in New Orleans, and then the orange box represents the Lower 9th Ward. So you can see how important good small area data is in understanding New Orleans.

If we're looking at New Orleans as a whole, you lose all of this important fine detail between small areas.

Another thing that we had done with Census data is incorporate community explanations of how that data came to be--why it's that way. So, for example, in the Lower 9th Ward, they had a higher rate of home ownership than the city as a whole--59 percent compared to 46.5 percent.

So we asked some residents why that was. And I'll just let you read that. [Text from slide: "This was one of the first subdivisions that was designated for African Americans. The idea was just so wonderful to be able to buy a lot for \$250, to be a house and be a homeowner. When my family first came here, we cut a street, a path really, to get back to this lot. In the Ninth Ward, you've got a group of people who've stayed because we wanted to – because we've got an investment in this community."]
So what the Census allowed us to do was build this rich information around the good detail that they were providing us.

And I'm going to give you five quick examples of how organizations in New Orleans were using Census data before Katrina. This is an example of a community activist who was working with the Douglas High School. And it's a neighborhood high school, and what he did is he got the addresses from the principal

about where the students were coming from, and he found that those students were clustered in about six neighborhoods. And what he wanted to do was turn this school into a community resource center. His theory was that you can't help individual students if you aren't helping to raise the quality of life in the entire neighborhood.

And so this--in this case, the student locations are mapped over income. You can see they were in pretty low-income neighborhoods. And then here I'll just give you a quick tour of some of the other data that this guy used to get funding into the school--educational attainment for adults, and also recent high school dropouts, number of single-parent households, and grandparents as caregivers, which is obviously a major factor contributing to the quality of life in neighborhoods.

Here's another example. This is from the Vietnamese Initiatives in Economic Training, and the executive director of this program was really successful at using our data, Census data, to get grant proposals to serve her community.

So, for example, she would use the English fluency data to find out by age how many non-Native speakers of English were not fluent in English. And so you can imagine how useful this is for program planning, because if you're designing a program to teach school-age children English, the design of that program will be a lot different than if you're teaching adults or seniors.

On the other side of things, from grant seeking to grant making, we were working with local funders, including the United Way, several large local foundations, and the City of New Orleans in how they distributed their CDBG dollars to design their grant applications, so they were asking for neighborhood-level data—that's Census data they were asking for so they could more strategically invest resources in the community.

Here's another piece of strategic work that was done by the Total Community Action agency, they wanted to set up their volunteer income tax assistance sites in areas where the working poor were, and wanted to see if their neighborhood centers would be a good place to do that.

And you can see that they had pretty good coverage in the low-income areas. I do want to point out here in New Orleans East, this area doesn't look so poor in Census 2000 data, but the working poor have been pushed out of the city center and a lot of them ended up in New Orleans East. It's not reflected in Census 2000 data.

After tax season, they mapped the addresses of the people they did free tax preparation for, and they could see that their neighborhood-based approach indeed did work. Another interesting thing they noted was that people were coming back to their old neighborhoods from New Orleans East to go get their taxes done.

And another place in New Orleans that's experienced a lot of changes are the public housing developments. Many of them have been torn down. One of them that was torn down in the last few years was the St. Thomas Housing Development, and when that happened, the a nearby adult learning center —saw their clientele numbers drop because there weren't as many people around any more. So they used educational attainment data by neighborhood to help home in on what neighborhood they might offer their services in, where they might be more needed.

So after Katrina, you can imagine this Census data was used for other purposes.

I want to give you just a brief overview of how that looked on our website. We were clipping along at a respectable pace of about 5,000 visits a month,

60,000 visits a year, and then at the end of August, Katrina hit, and most of those 40,000 visits were accounted for in the last three days. And then in September, we had 80,000 visits.

So in the course of a little over a month, we had twice the number of visits that we typically get in an entire year.

And it's interesting to take a day-by-day look at this, and you can see we were at a baseline of 200 visits a day, and then Katrina hit, and you see a lot of activity-- people wanting our information and then that second red swirl is Rita.

We wanted to look at who was actually using our data, and we've started to tease that out a little bit and have learned that our information was used as a reliable source of local intelligence by first responders such as FEMA and the Army. It was also used by the EPA and the 911 service. And it was used by the media a lot. And this New York Times spread on the left hand side, over there, they have a column that shows the demographics of areas with significant flooding and then they compare that to areas with little or no flooding. So we started to inform the national dialogue about the disparities between race and poverty that helped contribute to the disaster.

And then right after the water started to recede our local public health officials wanted to figure out where to put their first clinics--set them up, give people shots and provide basic health care--and so they combined data on elevation to find the high areas of town, along with Census data about poverty, where people might be uninsured and needing health care, and lack of access to transportation, so folks weren't able to evacuate. This is where they ended up putting their very first clinics in the first couple of weeks after Katrina.

And then this is a piece of data that we started working with last week. We were contacted by a preservation group for the National Park Service, and they wanted to see what historic areas of town were at risk for being demolished. So if you subtract out the nationally registered historic districts, you can see those dark spots represent areas that would be at high risk for losing some historic housing stock. It allows them to focus their limited resources on the area that are at most risk.

So the new data landscape. Things are very different now in New Orleans, as you can imagine. They were changing already. You know the Census data is already five years old, and so what we had done is when we knew, for example, that a housing development was torn down, we just would add a note to our website saying, hey, this stuff isn't accurate anymore.

But what we had here is sort of a catastrophic change in New Orleans demographics and there's just no way that you can account for that. You can't fudge it.

And what I'm particularly excited about with the American Community Surveys, they ask a question about where you lived one year ago. The Census long form used to ask where you lived five years ago, which was good data. But where you lived one year ago, I mean that's going to give us some good information to find out where New Orleanians landed and who's coming into the city.

And this is my last slide. And you all have--there are copies of this slide--this paper out front.

With Katrina, our 2000 Census data is now almost entirely historical. It gives us a good sense of who got hit the hardest and it can still be used to inform some local decision making. But it's not accurate anymore.

We've always counted on the Census to provide us with a rich source of small area data so that we could focus our energies on understanding our local audience and what information they need. And this data here is five-years-old. It's the best we have. The American Community Survey will allow me to come back to you in a few years with new data about poverty in New Orleans.

If the ACS doesn't proceed with its scheduled roll out of data, then we'll have to rely on the decennial census long form. So if you asked me five years from now about the poverty in New Orleans neighborhoods, I'd have to show you this same map, 'cause we won't have anything more recent five years from now. That's it. Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. : [Off mike.] [Inaudible.] I was wondering if it's possible to get the presentation electronically?

MR. REAMER: We'll be posting all the presentations on our web site.

You have a question, Terri Ann? Actually, this entire session is being taped for transcript, so for that and also for everyone in the audience, please say your name and where you're from.

MS. LOWENTHAL: Terri Ann Lowenthal, a consultant.

Just wondering if you have been able to convey any of this information, the valuable uses of the data. I found your presentation just very, very worthwhile. Have you been able to convey any of that to your congressional delegation and perhaps beyond to some of the other states hit by the hurricanes?

MS. WARREN: No. We just put this presentation together two days ago.

MR. REAMER: Other questions? Okay.

Bill O'Hare?

MR. O'HARE: Good morning. I'm Bill O'Hare with the Annie Casey Foundation, and it's a great pleasure to be here this morning to talk about an issue that I feel very strongly about and our Foundation feels very strongly about.

And as I was listening to the previous speaker, it really struck me that there's some connections in a couple of ways I guess to this ACS situation and the tragedy in New Orleans or the Gulf Coast that in many ways I think the problem we witnessed--the inability of the government to deliver what people need, and I think this ACS--possible loss of ACS falls in that same broad pattern, and there's many other ways I think that kind of trend seems to be unfolding in the current political climate of government not being able to deliver what its citizens need. So in some ways, I think this ACS issue is part of a broader trend that we can identify.

Let me say a word or two about the Annie Casey Foundation for those who aren't familiar with it. The Annie Casey Foundation is one of the top 10 or 15 largest foundations in the country, depending on how you measure it, and it is the largest foundation that focuses totally on the wellbeing of America's children. Our primary goal is to improve the lives of America's children, particularly the most disadvantaged children in the country.

And one of the beliefs that drives the Casey Foundation work is a belief that decisions based on good empirical scientific evidence and data are more likely to lead to better outcomes for children than decisions made on lots of other grounds that are

unfortunately the grounds for lots of decisions made by elected officials, politicians, and others.

And that value of getting good information, good data, good science into the hands of decision makers is mostly reflected in a project that the Foundation calls KIDS COUNT, which I have had the honor to direct for the last 12 years or so. And that KIDS COUNT project is reflected in a variety of things, but two or three things are the primary vehicles for that. One is this annual data book that we produce, every year-- that's why we call it annual. And it contains data on the wellbeing of children state by state, and measures trends over times and compares states--one state to another--and relies heavily on state-level data on child wellbeing. There are copies of this out in the foyer I think. If they're not, any of you can get a free copy by going to www.kidscount.org and lots of other information there. But if you want a hard copy, they're free, so let us know.

A second related way that we use data is on our KIDS COUNT website, which I just gave you. And we have all the data from this book plus lots of other particularly state-level measures of child wellbeing on that website, which we are in the process of expanding, primarily by putting up ACS data there that offers a lot of new and exciting measures of child wellbeing.

And the third aspect of the KIDS COUNT project is a network of state KIDS COUNT grantees that we fund to take this data-driven advocacy down to the county and city or sub-state level, and so for a lot of those folks, this ACS dataset is going to be enormously important for providing kinds of measures for cities and counties are simply not available now on a regular basis.

So for us, I know this budget decision that is out there is important for a lot of parts of the Census Bureau's activities, but I want to focus on the ACS, because that's what's most important to the KIDS COUNT network.

Over the last 15 years, the first KIDS COUNT data book came out in 1990, and this activity has kind of expanded since then, the Foundation has spent about \$100 million to produce this data and get it out to decision makers. So it's a big ticket item for our Foundation. We put a lot of money into getting good data out to folks, and we think it's important.

Just to give you one other quantitative part of that, we produce about 65,000 data books every year and distribute them to non-profits and to child advocacies and to elected officials and lots of other groups.

This last year, the 2005 edition, we used data from the American Community Survey for the first time to replace some other measures we had used at the state level that weren't nearly as good as the ACS data, primarily multi-year averages using the CPS and some other indicators.

So it was a decision we didn't take lightly in making that change from other sources to ACS, with our hope, our aspiration, that that data source would continue over time. And there are a couple of reasons that we moved to the ACS. One is the timeliness of it. As I think most of you probably know, you get data six months after collection is finished, which is very different than a lot of other data collection, data reporting systems that we have to use for measuring child wellbeing and lots of other aspects as well.

Secondly, because of the very large sample size in the ACS, it provides more accurate data at the state level than any other source that we have available on a regular basis. So the timeliness and the accuracy of it make it an obvious choice for us to use to track the wellbeing of children state by state.

And the third reason that we really were drawn to it is because it has and will continue to produce even more sub-state level data that's consistent with the state-level measures, so we don't have to use a variety of sources to put stuff together. It will provide good measures of child wellbeing for big cities, counties, metropolitan areas, and so on that our state grantees are particularly interested in and that the urban focus is more reflected in.

One of the questions that we ask ourselves--and you may be thinking or asking now--others have asked us is that okay you produce all this data. We know it gets distributed. We know about the websites--how are people are using it and what are they using it for, and I'm happy to say we completed a--commissioned a survey of state legislators through the National Conference of State Legislators about a year ago, and these are some of the results of that survey that show the perceptions of state legislators regarding the KIDS COUNT work. And we were very pleased on how many knew about it. In fact, just one point of reference that's not up here: 75 percent of the legislators said they know of KIDS COUNT and 95 percent of the staff, which is another survey, said they know of KIDS COUNT, which is even more gratifying.

In 1994, when a similar study was done, only 1 out of 175 state legislators recognized KIDS COUNT as a name, so I think its enormous visibility and

recognition over that 10-year period by the provision of this state-level data that is information that people want, including state legislators.

You can see the rest of this up there. It says, you know, a lot of good things about KIDS COUNT, the last couple things the perceptions of this group that it changed the public awareness and the public policy in states by the provision of this good data on children.

The second part of this survey, another part of the survey, the part I want to report here, talks about how state legislators use this data, and I want to go back to the point that the data we're talking about now is basically ACS data. And in the future, we hope to have ACS data, depending on the budget decisions. And I particularly draw I guess to these middle two figures that 49 percent use it in committee deliberations and 48 percent use it to craft legislation, policies, and programs, which I think we all agree are important policy decisions and these group of influentials are saying they're using this KIDS COUNT data, which relies on ACS, to make those decisions. So I think there's a link there showing how this data can have important implications for public policy decisions and why it's important to have the most accurate, timely data available.

Another aspect of this that I just want to touch on is the ability--if the ACS were to continue funding, which I hope it is, continue to get funding and continue operation, we are planning a whole bunch of auxiliary publications, like this purple-covered one that's out there that is profiles of 50 largest cities in America based on the ACS data, and on page 34 is a profile of New Orleans, which I wish we had a month ago, but the data just came out at the August. It took us a while to get it in place, but that's the kind of thing that we will report regularly on in the future if the ACS gets

funding, and I think kind of helped people get a grasp of the situation and the comparison of one big city compared to another or a big city compared to the state in terms of child wellbeing.

So let me conclude with a couple of final comments here I guess. One is that I'm convinced--and all the people in the KIDS COUNT network are convinced--that the ACS will provide more timely, more useful, more accurate state-level and local level data that we have now available, and that will help us do our job better.

One point that's already been raised is that the Census Bureau has invested three quarters of a billion dollars over the time period to get this system up and ready and, you know, those of us who have been watching it unfold over 10 years have seen the pains and struggles and efforts that's gone into that. I also mention that groups like ours have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars getting our grantees and our staff ready to use this data, so if this data doesn't become available, all that money will have been lost, not only in the public sector, but the private sector investments as well.

And finally--and I think this is probably the biggest point I would make--is that not funding the ACS is kind of ignoring the information needs of the 21st century. If we go back to this once a decade model and 1790, we're ignoring how fast society is changing and how much we need information today, and how much society has changed in terms of computers and data collection activities on the one hand, and the need for that up-to-date good information on the other.

And I'm concerned that this decision that Congress is wrestling with right now doesn't give any weight to the long-run vision for both the ultimate cost of the decennial census--you'll have it cost more if you don't do this and have to do a full

decennial census, and the long-run vision of what this country needs in terms of providing the data its citizens want. I think if you look at that long-run vision, you can't help but agree that the American Community Survey is the way to go. And let me stop there.

[Applause.]

MR. REAMER: Questions for Bill?

MR. ESKEW: Good morning. My name is Jim Eskew, and I work with Cushman & Wakefield, a global real estate services company. The company offers a number of different services for businesses that range from appraisal services, brokerage, asset management, project management.

I work in a group that offers location consulting services. And although we do have global capabilities on helping companies locate around the world, my primary focus is in the U.S., helping companies locate facilities right here in the U.S., whether it's an expansion or a shifting of jobs from one city to another. What we do is help them understand the differences in characteristics of local economies, so eventually if you have 400--if you have hundreds of cities to choose from, you have to choose one. And we help them—move them to a decision based on methods and models and characteristics we can draw--can understand from the different cities.

Now, how do we do that? Well, it's all based on solid data. So I have one slide here today, to kind of describe how we would be impacted by a change in the Census data the way it's collected and organized.

From my perspective, the Census information is the foundation. It is the--a really phenomenal effort to collect and organize effectively a sea of information in a way that it is useful for the thousands of users that's been described.

However, in my industry, in the business world, we--it's often--we need quick accessibility and also we need some value--often we demand value added to that foundational data. I would say that in my business we spend relatively short periods of time trying to make decisions that would impact a community because a business may be located--once they make a decision, they may end up being there for 10, 20, 50 years.

So what we do is often we purchase data through third-party data providers, and the value they add is one, accessibility. They have sort of a perspective on what the market demands, whether it be retailers, or location consultants, or a whole number of users that purchase this information. And they add value in a general way to try to meet the demands of the marketplace, such as updating estimates and projections at small areas, but also bringing in behavioral variables that they sort of layer onto Census data to add value so you can understand behavior characteristics of neighborhoods as well.

So that's the value there--accessibility and new knowledge created.

The application of data is where I fall into place as an analyst. After the third-party data providers, you still have more data than you need. So it's the selection of data--the variables that explain the most; those variables that create an understanding of labor dynamics in communities as they relate to business objectives--that's the key, 'cause we--businesses have thousands of reasons for locating in different places. What they don't understand, our clients don't really understand, is how that would link to

geography, because they're focused on how their business runs, operates. Often times, they have a good understanding of where their customers are located, but not necessarily, especially when they're comparing locations they haven't been to before.

So ultimately, once you make a decision--the idea is to have the best performance of a business in a new location in terms of recruitment, retention, and turnover so they can operate their businesses more effectively.

There's one point Bill made and I want to make as well. Decisions are made based on rational logic, scientific methods--rational logic and solid data. And if you have those two things, you have a higher likelihood for better performance. In my case, companies operating in a local economy in terms of their workforce.

So that's a key point I want to make. Does anybody have any questions?

Yes. You first?

MR. : [Off mike.]

MR. ESKEW: Let me answer it this way: A potential budget cut in the Census would suspend the ACS. The way I look at that is that is an opportunity lost to enhance the data that we use, especially in terms of year over year characteristics of small area geographies, especially with regard to income distribution, occupations, and age distribution. There's also some innovative things I've seen in the LEHD or the LED that is beginning to track time series information on turnover by industry by small geography, which is relatively a new thing. It hasn't been done before, and I think the opportunity there once that data is established--and not all states are participating--but once it's up and running and you have a consistent apples-to-apples comparison of

turnover, for example, it could really impact some decisions and make--and help us make better decisions about where to locate.

If you had high turnover in an area in a particular industry, not only the companies that are there would be better off if you didn't move in and possibly you had the risk of increasing the turnover. But the company we were representing would also be better off. Does that answer your question?

MR. : I thank you.

MR. VITARELLO: Hi. I'm Jim Vitarello from GAO, the Government Accountability Office.

The use of the American Community Survey, you mentioned it briefly, but particularly in the future, when it's supposedly getting better this year and next and so on, do you see a real use of that in your business?

MR. ESKEW: Well, I've actually this week I had a conversation with our third-party data provider, the chief demographer there, and they are--well, the first year of full roll out is this year for the ACS. So they are beginning to incorporate that information into their yearly updates for projections and estimates. So it would have an impact for the future on enhancement. If it didn't exist next year, in terms of integration into the projections and estimates, it wouldn't have an immediate impact because we would, you know, have the same tools we have today. But my view is any opportunity you have to improve the foundation of your analysis and as a way of answering the questions you need to answer is an opportunity lost.

MR. REAMER: Another question.

MS. : A question for the previous speakers; is that okay?

MR. REAMER: A question for Mr. Eskew? Well, thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. REAMER: Bill Frey.

MR. FREY: Okay. Good morning. It's really exciting to see all of these people here interested in the Census and interested in the ACS, and I hope that we are able to convince people that it's an important thing for us to continue.

Andy asked me to speak here to provide more of a perspective from the academic and think tank community and how we use Census data, and how we use the ACS. And I think it's fair to say that the audiences for all of the research that's being produced from the think tanks and non-profits and advocacy groups and universities is really being used very broadly across all kinds of audiences. I think people are becoming much more sophisticated about the use of data and much more hungry about getting more data, and I think that there is an increasingly stronger bridge between those people who produce research and those people who consume research. And I think the real equation in all of this is the understanding why data is really very important. People want more data. They understand how to use it.

The appetite for all of this across all of these different communities has been whetted by the accessibility and the fast turnaround of the 2000 Census data that the Census produced on their website. This whole appetite I think was initially generated by journalists, because of all the stories that came out from the 2000 Census, but eventually filtered off into all these other organizations that produce lots of very quick and useful reports immediately after the 2000 Census was released.

Here at Brookings in our Metropolitan Policy Program, we have something called the Living Cities Census Series, and where we do a whole series of different reports on topics such as concentrated poverty, immigrant gateways, affordable housing, segregation, singles moving to the suburbs, brain drain, and you name it. In addition, we have a data book and a set of data books that we put up on our website that people have been using.

And if you look at the hits that we've had ever since the release of this series, it's just been phenomenal, and we mailed hard copies of a lot of these reports to lots of people, and it's been used at the local planning level. It's been used by university people. It's been used by government decision makers, private sector decision makers. And we're not the only people in town who've been doing this. The Annie E. Casey Foundation has been doing this sort of thing. The people at the Population Reference Bureau have put out a series of very useful reports after the 2000 Census in all variety of different topics related to race and ethnicity and gender and family changes in the United States. The Pew Hispanic Center has done it. The Migration Policy Institute has done it, and many other places.

And I think there was just an insatiable demand for this kind of very current information for different population groups and at the small and local area.

And then eventually the university people get into the act and start doing much more quickly than they had ever done before research using small area data for different population groups and changes over time. All kinds of interesting contextual models can be made to show the neighborhood effects on poverty, on crime; that you

can get so much power from these data that you wouldn't normally get if you didn't have this kind of small area data.

So this is all fine. I mean this is almost business as usual except for the very quick accessibility of the data that we've had at the end of the 2000 Census period. That is, every 10 years, a bunch of data becomes downloaded. People start using it for a lot of purposes, but then as we start getting to the end of the decade, the data becomes a little old. The data become a little stale, and you start to get around 2006, 2007, 2008, and you're still looking at those statistics from 2000, not only for New Orleans, but for any part of the country. They get to be pretty old.

And so I don't think we can put up with this kind of very once a decade old school model of producing data anymore and trying to understand the social trends in the United States anymore.

We have become a very dynamic society. We're in a global marketplace. We're in--as Bill says, if we're in the 21st century, not back in the 18th century anymore, and I think what we really need to do is have this kind of annual mobility--annual series of datasets coming out.

I think what opens people's eyes about this is what's happened with the results of the 2000 Census. People didn't realize just how many foreign-born people were in the United States, just how many Hispanics were in the United States. Even the Census Bureau found that there were five million more people in the United States than they thought there were going to be when they looked at the 2000 Census. There's a reason that there is this dynamic change in American society due to not only the changes in the immigrant minority populations, the aging of the Baby Boomers will bring about

more shifts in the way they live, and we just can't deal with a 10-year snapshot, especially if we're dealing with different subgroups of the population at the local levels-- dealing with health care issues, dealing with school issues, social service requirements of these people.

At the community level, we can't deal with these older data.

And so what I'd like to talk about a little bit is an area that I'm most familiar with, which is the migration statistics that are involved with the Census and other parts of the statistical system.

And as someone who's looked at migration for a long time and tried to understand population shifts across the country, I have to say it's almost a disgrace when we talk about the nature of migration statistics that are available in the United States in order to be able to understand movement occurring in local communities. And I don't say this that because I think the Census Bureau is doing anything wrong. But I think there needs to be something more regular over the course of the decade, over the course of small areas. We can get a much better sense about who's moving into communities, who's moving out of communities, rather than dealing with a once-a-decade picture.

One of the reasons I say this is because the best migration information that we have in terms of understanding the characteristics of in-migrants and the characteristics of out-migrants coming to particular areas is from the decennial census where they ask a question, "where did you live five years ago?" So you can get wonderful information about the migration of people between 1995 and 2000 for the people who answered the question in 2000, where did they live five years ago, but if you're worried about what's going on in the first part of the decade, all you can get is a

very crude sense of what's going on. So to illustrate this, I have a trend of domestic migration. This is net migration for the State of California over the course of the period 1990 to 2004. Those statistics come from the estimation program of the Census Bureau, and they're fine. They get updated and sort of tweaked over time, but all they give you is a number of people who have moved out net. They don't give you anything about the characteristics of people or the flows of people coming in and flows of people coming out. And for California, the only kind of detailed picture we can have of this migration is for the period between 1995 and 2000, which you see is doesn't take in the big net out migration from California in the first part of the '90s decade due to the defense cut backs and all kind of natural disasters and things that were going on in California. So you get a very distorted picture of the selectivity of migration in and out, and you see things have changed since 2000.

If we look at--go further down in geography, just to the sub-regional level in California, and we look at the yellow line in the bottom is the Greater Los Angeles region, and its patterns are more or less responsible for the state patterns in the early part of the decade.

San Francisco Bay Area, that green line, started to perk up as the dot com boom started in the late 1990s, and then it started to move down again, and now we see the central valley or the central part of California is moving up rather rapidly. But the only piece of this that we see from the decennial census and the only kind of detailed migration statistics we have is for that short period between 1995 and 2000. So even though we know these kinds of broad trends are going on, we really don't know who's in

these different groups. And this is only domestic migration, movement within the United States.

What I've put up here are components of change for three different states, where the red bar represents the immigration component, which wasn't included in those earlier diagrams, and the green bar is domestic migration, which is negative not only for California, but for New York and Texas.

And, of course, there's this constant inflow and outflow of folks, but the immigrant flows are very different, especially in California, made up, to a large degree, of Hispanics and Asians--very different educational attributes, very different language skills, and the out migration any more in California as far as we know from the 1990s and the 2000 Census is not just Whites anymore, but it's also Hispanics moving out, so we have what's called secondary migration of immigrants, which is infusing all of the populations around California with new minority populations that they haven't seen before. But we don't know about this from 2000 to 2004. I'm just extrapolating from what I learned from looking at the late 1990s, when I had much better statistics.

All we know is this kind of thing is going on, and if you look to a state like Florida, you think, well, there's a state that has a lot of immigrants and a lot of domestic migrants, but it's very different from Miami, which is dominated by immigration, than it is for Orlando, which is dominated by domestic migration.

So what do we get now if we're at the first part of a decade, and, by the way, the first part of the last several decades were a very different economic climate nationally than the second part of the last several decades. The early '70s, the early '80s, and even the early '00s, the economy wasn't nearly as good nationally as it was in the last

part of the decade so that the detailed migration statistics we've been getting for the last several decades have been for the best part of the decade economically not for the worst part. Well, of course, it varies by different levels of regions across the country.

So what you would try to get if you were looking at the first part of the decade--I tried to sort of simulate by putting together two kinds of estimates; one from the Census Bureau's Estimation Program, one from the Current Population Survey, and third from the 2000 Census, and I did it for the 1995 to 2000 period to see what it's like when you actually have good data and compare these other two kinds of estimates to the Census.

It's kind of good for California. You know, we may have been lucky in this respect, and I put in a caveat that when we use the CPS to measure net migration, there's a lot of sampling variability, which I didn't throw in here. I just have point estimates. But if you do this for the State of Louisiana, those estimates look quite different. And this varies from state to state. The estimates program from the Census Bureau grossly underestimated immigration over the course of the 1990s, which we found out when we looked at the Census. The CPS seems to have overestimated immigration to Louisiana over the 1995 to 2000 period, but we're dealing with a very small survey when we deal with the CPS. I'm surprised it actually looks this close. In a sense, we're sort of lucky.

The other thing you get from the Census is characteristics of the population. And so if we're interested, say, in the educational characteristics of movement coming into the State of California, the right hand side is from the Census, where we look at the net migration by different levels of education--less than high

school, high school grad, some college, and college graduation. And, of course, California has this out migration of non-college graduates. If you look at the Census numbers, part of this is--

[End of Tape 1, Side A; flip to Side B]

MR. FREY: [In progress.]--I essentially took the one-year question from the CPS, and put them together for five CPS's, to look at this.

But again, if you look at this for Louisiana, you get a very different picture. You get a real brain drain from Louisiana using the Census data, but when you look at the CPS data, you get something that looks a little strange, and if you look at sort of the college graduate migration over all of the states and compare the picture you would get using the 2000 Census for the 1995 to 2000 period with this kind of crude CPS estimate that I've done, there are some things that really pop out. The CPS would tell you that Texas was losing college graduates over the late 1990s, when, in fact, it was gaining. And there are bunch of states in the Southeast and in the Lower Midwest that would be gaining under the CPS scenario, but were actually losing college graduates in the late 1990s, and this is at the state level. I mean if you want to go down to cities and small communities and metropolitan areas, there is even nothing in the CPS that you could use to estimate these kinds of attributes, and this is all you have unless you're in that window of five years before a decennial census, when the only migration question that's any good is the long form question of where did you live five years ago.

So if for no other reason than to help us understand where population is moving across small communities and large for the whole decade, we really need to have the American Community Survey.

I wanted to talk about just one other thing, and here I'm borrowing from the very fine report that was put out by Jeffrey Passel and Roberto Suro a couple weeks ago from the Pew Hispanic Center where they had documented the fact that immigration to the United States peaked during the 2000 period and declined since. It's a very fine report, and it uses the best available data that can be gotten to understand the immigration flows to the United States. But as you can see that best available data is very disparate. Each of those different lines come from a different time series of data points, some of them from the Current Population Survey; some of them from the decennial census; some of them from the now very small-sized version of the American Community Survey, which will be beefed up later.

And there are hundreds of thousands of person differences for any given year, so wisely the authors of this report averaged them all to sort of get the idea that there as this peak.

But if you wanted a point estimate of how immigrants are coming to the U.S., none of these data sources give you--even at the national level--give you something that's really very good, and we're hoping again that with the funding of the ACS, we'll get a good estimate of immigrants to the United States. It won't be the whole part of that estimate, but it will help us inform that estimate a lot better than the datasets that we have here.

So I mean in sum, this is just one example dealing with how migration and immigration are affected, the statistics on these behaviors will be improved by the ACS when fully implemented, and how we have a big hole that we have to fill in understanding these patterns unless we get something like the ACS.

I think this is an important time for all of us that care about understanding statistics at small areas, especially again, as Bill O'Hare said and others have said, in the 21st century, where we really need to know what's going on to do sophisticated planning for educating the next generation, for assimilating immigrants, for dealing with our elderly populations, and I really hope that we can get these kind of statistics going. So thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. REAMER: Thank you. Any questions for Bill?

How about our speakers coming to the stage, and we'll have a little discussion. While they are coming forward, I want to read to you something from the Senate Appropriations Committee report on the Census Bureau budget and ask Cindy Taeuber, formerly of the Census Bureau to comment on it. For the periodic censuses--the decennial census, the ACS, and other censuses that the Bureau puts together--the OMB asked for \$657 million. The House gave \$624 million, and the Senate Appropriations Committee recommendation was for \$544 million, \$113 million less than what the President asked for and \$80 million less than what the House asked for. The Committee's report says "The Committee is fully supportive of the efforts being made to make this 2010 census as accurate and as cost effective as possible. To the extent possible, funds have been provided to ensure that activities related to the 2010 census are able to continue. The Census Bureau is encouraged to continue its efforts to minimize the number of personal visits for non-response follow up for Census programs." [aside] Meaning that people didn't answer the mail survey. They have to send someone out to the house to get the answer. "This non-response follow-up activity is very costly and if

response rates through other means can be increased, it will provide substantial cost savings in both the ongoing American Community Survey and the 2010 census.”

So Cindy, and if we can get a mike to Cindy, can you comment on the Committee’s thoughts here?

MS. TAEUBER: While I can’t comment on their thought process, I can say that in order to have a 2010 census, you can’t start January 1st, 2010. The Census Bureau has to make decisions now. And part of doing that is testing. One of the things under this budget that will be lost is the 2006 census test. And part of that census test is the very thing the Senate asked for, which is what--what we all want are the data. But behind that are tests of technology--hand-held computers, and how they will help update the address list faster, better, reduce follow up--follow up meaning--having--getting every address, getting every household, getting the people within the household. If those things aren't there, if those things aren't there, you won't--you'll have data, but, well.

So the Census Bureau does an enormous number of things, and 2006 is a very critical set of tests that relate to these very things that relate to the cost of the census and the accuracy of the data that you will have later.

I was struck when the--every panelist was talking--we were all saying, well, we want data, we want accurate data, and we want it on time. We're not talking about abstract numbers. What they were really telling us, we're talking about the stories of people and how we look at them and how we distribute, plan equitably. It's a way that we have of getting up on top of the hill and looking at our situations. So we're not just talking about a bunch of numbers that appear on a piece of paper or on our computer screens. We're talking about us. We're talking about people in New Orleans, people in

New Hampshire. We're talking about our families. That's what we're talking about and having good information to see that.

The 2006 test is in jeopardy. As the Washington Post told us this morning, it's not just will we have an American Community Survey. It could be will we even have long form data. The Census Bureau can't wait until 2009 or 2010 to decide that. They need to plan for that now. And they need to make those decisions now. To do the long form in 2010 will be enormously expensive. One of the things that the ACS does is spread out the data collection and the costs over 10 years so that it doesn't happen all in one lump.

The Census Bureau has to guess, along with the Congress, as to whether--they have to decide now will there be billions of dollars in 2010 to conduct a long form. There might be, but we don't know, and they have to decide now, and that's what we're really talking about.

MR. REAMER: Thank you, Cindy. I think the best way to do this is just--is to open it again to the audience. The gentleman over here had some questions. Why don't we start with you?

MR. POWERS: Ed Powers. I have no affiliation. I wanted to follow up on a question that was asked of Denice earlier about how the information--results of your work--is being used possibly to influence Congress. It seems to me that there's such an tremendous opportunity here with the results of what you're doing in New Orleans and using the data to help rebuild, save the day in so many ways that properly put together, it is such a convincing case to me and should be to most everyone that we need this data in order to react to catastrophes of this type. All else can be theoretical

and it's a good thing to do and all that, but here is a specific example, a potential for you to make the case and sell it Congress. And I just hope that's what comes out of your work--one of the products of your work. So what do you say?

MS. WARREN: I already know. It will be there.

MR. REAMER: Any thoughts from folks in the audience familiar with the budget decision making process about the best way to get Denice's story to decision makers? David McMillen, Terri Ann?

MS. LOWENTHAL: I think there's a lot of things that can be done, but it has to be done pretty quickly.

MR. REAMER: Okay.

MR. MCMILLEN: [Off mike.] One thing is you might be just willing to share--

MR. REAMER: Mosi, tell people who you are.

MR. KITWANA: Yes. My name is Mosi Kitwana. I'm with International City-County Management Association. One suggestion, if you haven't done this already, is share this information with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the major lobbying organizations for local government so that they can use it in their deliberations and not only get--use their own platform for communicating with Congress, but also share the information nationwide so others can join into that effort.

MR. REAMER: That's a really good idea. I think what the Urban Markets Initiative will be doing in the next couple days is contacting those organizations

and letting them know that the--all the slide presentations, plus the transcript, will be available on our website.

MR. KETWAN: Well, we're glad to help in any way we can with that.

MR. REAMER: Great. Thank you.

MR. CALABIA: Tino Calabia with Housing and Development--HUD.

A question to Cindy. Before past decennial censuses, there were usually two or three tests. Could you tell us how many there are expected to be this decennial census, even if they cut the 2006, and also which cities were identified as test sites?

MS. TAEUBER: There was a 2004 test. The plan is to have a 2006 test, and we may lose that. 2008 is the dress rehearsal and dress rehearsal is not supposed to be a test. It's the night before the play. So 2006 is the test--the time when we can still make some--when the Census Bureau can still make some adjustments that are needed and learn from it. But 2008 is the night before the play.

MR. CALABIO: And the city?

MS. TAEUBER: City for the dress rehearsal. I don't guess I know. The 2006 test will be in Austin and an American Indian reservation, which is just in and of itself is a very important part of what's--I don't--does anybody. Terri Ann, do you know? It has not been selected. Okay.

MR. REAMER: Other questions please? In the back here?

MS. LOUBERT: My name is Linda Loubert, a political economist from the Institute for Urban Research. Isn't it more about it being--let me just phrase it this way, it's not about that the ACS is invaluable or whatever. It's more about maybe legislators or whoever is in charge of the legislative process are more concerned about

homeland security and the fact that maybe all of this information is some kind of way a threat. Isn't it--I mean aren't we--isn't it something like that? Because we all know that decisions for--that come out of Congress are more back behind the door kind of things, so I mean to me that just seems that's what's going on as opposed to everyone here knows how invaluable the data is.

MR. REAMER: David McMillen, are you comfortable saying what your perception is of the ranking--where statistics lays in the priorities of Congress?

MR. MCMILLEN: I think there are a couple of things going on. One is that the Census Bureau is projecting that the 2010 census is going to cost about twice what the 2000 census did. And I don't think the Senate understands what it's getting for that investment. So it's looking at the numbers and saying, you know, why is this going up so much, you know. We're five years away from the census. Where's this money going? And so they said, well, then if we don't know where it's going, we can cut it. That's, you know. That's pretty simple.

Two thousand five is also sort of the nadir of everyone's interest in the decennial census, whether it be the Conference of Mayors or, you know, the League of Cities, or whomever, and what we're seeing is that nadir of interest reflected in the decision making process.

Unless, you know, the people who use the data get to their vast constituencies and explain to them the importance, and they get to the decision makers, we get decisions like were made in the Senate--ones based on not having enough information either from constituents or from executive agencies. You know, what are we talking about information driving markets?

MR. REAMER: Yes. Thank you. Behind David there.

MS. MCGUCKIN: Hi. I'm Nancy McGuckin. I'm a transportation consultant. I just want to say the nadir of interest has really ruined the trust of a lot of the people who have been depending on the ACS. And for us, I think the fact that we cannot--no longer depend on the sample sizes that have been promised or even the fact of continuing this experiment. Some people are saying scrap it. Go back to the long form. That's how bad it is in my community in terms of going forward. I mean we may be able to work with Congress. We may be able to make the case, but we have to trust that there will be continuing interest throughout the decade, not ups and downs of interest--continuing interest to keep this program going.

MR. REAMER: Nancy, will you say a couple of words about how you use the long form data now and how you would hope to use the ACS data if you could trust its ongoing availability.

MS. MCGUCKIN: Well, we actually put together--and, of course, Bruce Speer [ph.] is here from Federal Highway. We put together--it's called the Census Transportation Planning Package. It's a secondary use for small area transportation planning that uses specially created tabulations from the census to look at journey to work transportation flows. So we have people at their residence and people at their workplace and how they get to work. Those data are used primarily for developing infrastructure improvements at the local level--things like bus stop locations and right turn lanes and even signal timings--I mean very specific improvements to the infrastructure. Most people have been rather happy with the 10-year program. The timeliness, as we've all heard today, in terms of immigration and changes in

demographics affects that as well. But the ACS has promised sample sizes that would be sufficient to continue that kind of very small area, and especially given what the Senate Subcommittee said in terms of not doing follow ups--face-to-face follow ups--that net sample size now is getting to the point where we have to aggregate geographies to such a large geographic group that it's almost meaningless to us anyway. So at this point, we are all pretty, you know, bummed out. And then today, you know, and seeing how the funding is not going forward, we're like even more bummed out. So we're pretty--our trust is close to being lost on this project.

MR. REAMER: Thank you. Are there any other federal agencies in the room that rely on Census data? Terri Ann, you wanted to speak.

MS. LOWENTHAL: Well, only if there was nobody else? Well, I just--just following up on what our colleague here said about the trust issue. There has all along been some caution on the part of many data users, both with other federal agencies and particularly in the business sector concerned about the very thing that's just happened, which is they very much wanted the American Community Survey. They very much want--you know, buy into the idea of having more timely data, but they were always concerned as to whether Congress would make the ongoing commitment to fund it. And so clearly this year is the make or break year, just as the Census Bureau said it is. Regardless of whether I think the Census Bureau decides whether to go forward after this year, I think if Congress doesn't come up with a good--you know, a good chunk of money, I think a lot of the data users and the stakeholders are going to give up on the idea that Congress will ever truly be on board. They don't want to play this game every year. And they'd rather support a long form.

Having said that, I think it's premature for the Census Bureau to be talking about no long form in 2010, and I just have to say having spent my career on the Hill, and not just in the '90s, Andy, but also in the '80s, so I've been through, you know, was there for two censuses, and the long form and the ACS collect data that Congress has required. Now, maybe some of that might be cut back and that was always a real fear. But I think it's a little political disingenuous from a political perspective to suggest right now that there may not be a long form at all.

I think one thing that the Census Bureau may have made a bit of a political or strategic miscalculation is that they really thought that Congress would buy into the American Community Survey once it saw all of the wealth of data and how wonderful it is and how it can be used. And everyone in this room understands that because that's what a number of speakers have said. Why can't everybody else see this? But politicians don't approach things that way. And so they were not necessarily willing to stand around saying we'll throw--we'll give you all this money and wait to see what you produce. They want to have some confidence up front that the product that they're getting is going to be very useful, and I think that's where the Census Bureau may have fallen short a bit in making that case.

So clearly, folks in this room and way beyond this room have a--in the next couple of weeks have a make or break role to play in trying to make that case. And otherwise, I mean I think clearly they're back to a long form in 2010.

And if I can just say one other thing because there were some good suggestions about contacting the mayors and others, and I think some people, but maybe not all, in this room are familiar with, you know, a relatively new project, but building

off a project we had in the 2000 census of a coalition of stakeholder groups across the whole range of businesses, civil rights organizations, professional scientific groups, state and local governments and the like, that have come together to try and make the case as a whole called the Census Project, and it may be in the short time left that it, you know, we could really help get information out, because the mayors and others, as David said, aren't paying as much attention as perhaps they could because there's so many other things on their plate right now, but they do--they do work with us--have signed on to all our letters, and if they're doing anything right now, it's to a large extent, not entirely, but to a large extent through the Census Project.

So that may be the quickest way to get out information on this wonderful presentation about, you know, the hurricane areas.

MR. REAMER: Two things, Terry. One, please tell people how to get in contact with you, to find out more about the Census Project. Two, can you give people a quick understanding of what happens from today forward in terms of congressional deliberation on--what the conference committee process is.

MS. LOWENTHAL: All right. Well, very quickly, and please, David, add. But I mean the bottom line is the House has not appointed conferees yet, but it is known traditionally that all members of the House Subcommittee and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the Census Bureau will be conferees. They are waiting to appoint those in part because there's a real problem between how the House and Senate are going to meet when their jurisdictions are incompatible at this point. One bill covers the State Department; the other doesn't. So there's kind of an appropriations

mess this year, somewhat unrelated to the Commerce Department and the Census Bureau.

Nevertheless, the staff of the members of the anticipated conference committee have been meeting and talking since August, and they are trying to resolve issues that they can resolve at the staff level. The census has not been resolved. We understand it has not been discussed in great detail yet, so as the weeks unfold, at some point the House will appoint conferees. They will then meet with the Senate negotiators, but--I was just talking to David McMillen about this earlier--he said, I mean they could have an initial meeting perhaps as early as late next week although nobody knows for sure, and it still could take weeks and weeks after that to come to a full resolution on the funding in this bill. And I'll just tell you, as a final note that I met with one of the top Senate Republican staff on the Conference Committee, and they've heard nothing yet about a conference next week, but they've also said they think that the Commerce funding bill is going to be one of the last ones out of the gate.

David thinks this whole mess with the appropriations process could just go into January again, like it did last year. So it could happen quickly and it could not happen quickly and that's the nature of Congress, and people just need to keep speaking up.

And I apologize for going on so long.

MR. REAMER: That's what I asked you to do.

MS. LOWENTHAL: The website is www.thecensusproject.org. People can also get our census news briefs on there, with some, you know, the ongoing

information about what's happening on the Hill and with stakeholder groups and other related activities.

MR. REAMER: And if people want to make their opinion known to the Conference Committee members, what's the best way to do that?

MS. LOWENTHAL: Write letters, but fax them and or e-mail. Forget snail mail. But the even better way to do it is to try and find constituents within your constituencies that come from the districts or at least the states of the members of the Conference Committee. I mean that's how people on the Hill work. They will be most responsive to people, you know, from their own states. So even if your members or Senators don't sit on the Conference Committee, it's worth getting in touch with them so they can convey your concerns to the more, you know, relevant members at this time.

But, you know, Alabama was hit by the hurricane, so hopefully there are people in this same situation as you are who you might know who could then get in touch Senator Shelby's office.

MR. REAMER: Okay.

MS. LOWENTHAL: That's just an example.

MR. REAMER: And your website will list the Conference Committee members?

MS. LOWENTHAL: We have. Yeah. That's been in the Census News Briefs.

MR. REAMER: David, you wanted to respond and then there was someone in the back.

MR. MCMILLEN: I want to emphasize how important it is that you make these kinds of communications. There's a little agency inside the National Archives called the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Five, six million dollars a year. I mean the Census Bureau is approaching a billion dollars a year. Really tiny.

It got zero funded in the 2006 budget by the Administration. Before the bill came before the House of Representatives, that Subcommittee got literally hundreds of letters, communications from state and local governments, from small organizations that have been funded by this organization. You know, this organization is now in New Orleans worrying about how to preserve things like records on who owns what land. You know? If you don't have records on land ownership, you can't sell anything. I mean the whole process shuts down. All of that stuff got soaked. You know. Tiny agency. Fully funded. Not by the Administration, but by Congress, because it heard from its constituents on a one-on-one basis, you know, people in the community affected and in the community that lives in the member's district. That has tremendous power. And the community that supports the American Community Survey and the modern census has to learn that lesson and has to generate that kind of volume and intensity. It works.

MR. REAMER: Thank you. Let's see. So this gentleman there and then Connie.

MR. HERRING: Hi. I'm Lee Herring with the American Sociological Association. Just a very brief note about what we're doing just as an example. I'm sure there are a lot of associations here doing similar things, but we just posted on our

website in our news section a link to a--we've been working with the Population Association of America, a link to basically an Action Alert, and it's an Action Alert that's been growing over the past year, of course, with new information to our members to urge them to write letters at different points in the legislative process. So the latest one obviously has to do with the conferees. And indeed there's no question about the power of constituents writing letters to their members. The members do listen to these letters. They do take note. They tally them and so forth.

So there are plenty of members of our association, and I'm sure of many other associations around town that are sort of itching and dying to write letters. I get them all the time, because I also do the newsletter. And so clearly, it's a good way to channel their energy by sending letters instead to a more influential body in our nation, which is Congress.

MR. REAMER: Thank you. Connie?

MS. CITRO: Hi. I'm Connie Citro with the Committee on National Statistics at the National Academy of Sciences. I would like to underscore the make or break nature of this year. Both the ACS and the Census planning are under threat from these budget cuts. If they both are affected and the ACS is dropped and the Census Bureau goes back to a long form, they will be somewhat in the position they were the last time where they really do not have the time or, in this case, the bucks to plan properly for how to integrate the long form back into the various processes that they're trying to set up to improve the basic head count. And in 2000, the quality of the long form data was extremely poor. We had a panel that looked at that in detail. It was shockingly poor in some--in instance having to do with response rates and so on. And I

cannot imagine a scenario in which it would be much better in 2010 given the fact that the Census Bureau is having to change its plans in mid course and given all the public phenomena, such as not wanting to respond to questionnaires and politicians in the height of the census talking about how intrusive the long form is and so on and so on.

So the ACS is not only providing or can not only provide more timely data, but if it is carried out and gets its full funding and continuous funding, the quality will be better because there are trained interviewers focused--whose job is to get the long form data; whereas in the census, the job has always been to get the head count and the long form trails along. And with social trends that we have had, the long form trailing has gotten--has gotten worse. So I think this really is a make or break. In other words, a long form in 2010 is not going to do for the users what traditionally people have expected and valued from that. And again, that's a message that's very hard to convey. I know about the importance of data quality, but I truly would think that, you know, if the ACS had been ongoing right this minute, at the full level of small area detail, the advantages for the areas that have been hit by disasters and other parts of the country that need that data would have been more than manifest, and the problem is right now the Census Bureau is in a--we can't get the money until we can prove it. But we can't prove it until we get--you know, until we get the money.

But anyway, I did just want to underscore that, you know, the long form in 2010 is not going to fill the bill the way a full ACS would.

MR. REAMER: Thank you, Connie, for that. Any other questions or comments people want to make? Right here.

MR. NORD: I'm Mark Nord with Economic Research Service of the USDA. You had just asked about whether there were other federal agencies represented here that use the Census data, and USDA has some overall coordinating and information responsibility relating to rural development, and our agency provides much of the statistical information on social, economic, labor, and so on conditions in rural areas and relies heavily on the small area information available in the Census from the long form and potentially in the future on the American Community Survey. I'm not in a position to judge how much would be lost between the long form and the ACS, but certainly we're interested in data quality and in having one or the other of those sources or we basically can't provide the information that we're expected to provide on conditions in rural areas.

MR. REAMER: Thank you. Anyone else like to say something? Yes.

MS. DAVIS: Hi. My name is Laurel Davis. I'm with Optimal Solutions Group. We do public policy consulting, and we do a lot of program evaluation work. And I guess what I'm going to say is more of a comment and less of a question. But if people in this room are considering writing letters or contacting, I would urge you to kind of include in there that Census data and Census derivative products are often datasets that are most used in evaluating federal policy and federal programs. For the work we do at the federal level, Congress is really going to kind of kick themselves in the butt, because you won't be able to evaluate their programs very effectively if you don't have good data to do it on.

And often the evaluations that we're doing are actually mandated by Congress. So.

MR. REAMER: Thank you. Gary Yakimov, you want to say a couple words about the use of the emerging LEHD tool?

MR. YAKIMOV: Sure.

MR. REAMER: For workforce development?

MR. YAKIMOV: There was a question and also a comment about LED earlier. I'm from the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, and we do consulting with workforce boards and governors and mayors and county executives across the country on workforce policy. And at a time when our country is at this turning point on our economic needs and how we're--skilled labor and where skilled labor is going and how they're interacting with employers, particularly around site-based selection, LED has enormous ramifications for workforce policy. For example, we can tell in LED for the first time where new hires are, how much they're making, in what industries. And so when we try to, for example, help place evacuees from hurricanes we can place them in industries for which they may make higher wages than other industries and may be better qualified.

Also I think, and this has huge ramifications for trying to influence local elected officials, LED can help us for the first time actually talk about job creation. Typically, you hear a governor or mayor say since I was elected X number of jobs have been created on my watch. And the way they do that is actually quite bogus, because they simply look at the employment when they were elected and where they are now. And with LED, they can look at job creation where industries are adding jobs, what firms are adding jobs, and the types of geographic areas in detailed industries that are adding jobs, and that's hugely important.

But I think even more important for particularly small market initiatives and urban initiatives is the mapping feature of LED, and I don't know how many of you have been exposed to that. But for the first time, we can--LED is the first program really that has merged in a systematic way supply data with demand data. We can look at wage records and Census records to see not only where people live, but where they work. And we can map that out, and it has huge spatial analytical benefits, for example, where an employer [inaudible]. My microphone just went off.

MR. REAMER: That's okay.

MR. YAKIMOV: Okay. So using that data we can know, for example, an employer can look at that and say well, we know that X number of people leave their homes in this area, go to work in this area, and go to work for this purpose [inaudible] banking or [inaudible]. So an employer is much more likely to locate where they know people are going to come into--where people are going to come into their local marketplace, because they know they're already going there for a manufacturing job or a finance job. That's a huge impact on [inaudible] if you were managing transportation planning. So this system could potentially replace or complement that. The data are updated annually off real records--wage records where people are living and working. So I think that has huge ramifications as well. And so not only for workforce policy but for decision making around transportation and business location, it has huge benefits in the system.

MR. REAMER: Thank you, Gary. A comment from Jim and then we're actually--we're meeting with our funders.

MR. ESKEW: I wanted to just complement what he was saying. That-- the opportunity to have that type of data at small area geographies for businesses making location decisions. One you mentioned the mapping capabilities. That helps companies to find effectively labor sheds as it relates specifically to their industry, but also what it gives you is, for example, going back to the turnover information, for example, it gives you a consistency across geographies so that you can, as an analyst, compare things without noise from the outside. And what I mean by that, if you don't have that, you really have to begin to rely on anecdotal information, interviewing people in a community, which is inherently a very small sample size. Sometimes you can talk to two and three people. You need a very solid understanding of job growth by industry and other information, and the more consistent that can be, the better a comparative analysis is and the less you have to rely on anecdotes.

MR. REAMER: Thank you, Jim. I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank our panel--Jim Eskew, Denice Warren, Bill O'Hare, and Bill Frey.

[Applause.]

MR. REAMER: We hope you found this informative. The transcript and the presentations will be available on our website as soon as possible.

[END OF RECORDED SEGMENT.]