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March 15, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
1233 Longworth House Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
233 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
2306 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
2365 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Chair Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

We are writing to express our support for adequate funding for the U. S. Census Bureau in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019 to provide for the fair, equitable and successful implementation of the decennial census so that young people do not go undercounted. As you know, the U.S. Constitution requires an accurate count of the nation's population every ten years, yet unfortunately, the 2020 Census remains underfunded. **We urge you to fund the U.S. Census Bureau at the level of at least \$1.848 billion for FY'18 and at least \$4.735 billion in FY'19.**

In November 2017, The Council for a Strong America reported that "Young children (under age five), particularly those from disadvantaged families, are the age group most likely to be undercounted, with more than one million missed in the last census in 2010."<sup>1</sup> The census count impacts private investment decisions that lead to economic development opportunities for our communities, determines the distribution of our

<sup>1</sup> Council for a Strong America, "An Accurate Census is Essential for a Strong America," November 9, 2017.

congressional seats, and guides the allocation of hundreds of billions of federal dollars to programs benefitting children and low-income families. These far-reaching outcomes absolutely warrant an inclusive Census in 2020 that earns the public's confidence.

An insufficient increase in funding for the U.S. Census Bureau in the omnibus dangerously puts at risk the Bureau's ability to prepare for and conduct a fair and reliable count. Accurate data is especially critical for allocating federal funds to our children because we know that robust investment in early childhood development results in improved school performance, better health, higher earning potential, and increased opportunities for parents to participate in the workforce. The census data also informs state and local policy makers as they work to ensure proper services exist to meet the diverse needs of our communities and kids. In Fiscal Year 2015, the fifty states and the District of Columbia received nearly \$600 billion from sixteen census-guided programs that heavily support children and low-income families. Those programs include CHIP, Medicaid, Child Care and Development Fund, Foster Care, Head Start, the National School Lunch Program, Special Education Grants (IDEA) and WIC to name several. If the Census Bureau needs to cut corners and use untested methods for the 2020 census this would result in incomplete census data, and we fear our young people will be miscounted, federal funds will be misallocated, and predictably children will be underserved.

As Commerce Secretary Ross stated in his October 2017 testimony before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, "The Census Bureau faces latent challenges that have evolved over a long period of time, such as increase in the diversity of our populations, the complexity of living arrangements, the mobility of people in the United States, and a steady decline in self-response rates across all surveys." Other barriers to a successful census count include cyber-security risks, technology availability and access, and the growing fear of sharing personal information with the government. In particular, adding questions about "citizenship status" could adversely impact children of mixed status families and communities with large populations of immigrants by deterring participation and lowering the census response rate. We oppose such additions that would lead to a population undercount and harm the Census Bureau's ability to meet its obligations under the Constitution.

In addition, the Census Bureau's 2017 national population projections signal that older people will outnumber young people under the age of 18 by 2035, adding to the

importance of accurately counting our young people.<sup>2</sup> It is imperative that the Census Bureau is equipped to manage the growing number of challenges associated with delivering a fair and equitable census. Without an infusion of funds for the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2020 census certainly will fall far short of the comprehensive, accurate count that is foundational to our democracy and paramount for our children and economic future.

Sincerely,

First Focus Campaign for Children  
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities  
Child Welfare League of America  
Every Child Matters  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Black Child Development Institute  
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives  
National WIC Association  
Partnership for America's Children  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
UnidosUS

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<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau, "Older People Projected to Outnumber Children for First Time in U.S. History," March 13, 2018, retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>.