

Ken Hodges

BACKGROUND ON THE CENSUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The 2010 Census Advisory Committee (CAC) provides advisory input to the Census Bureau on the 2010 census, the American Community Survey, and related programs. Committee members represent a range of census stakeholders, and APDU's seat on the Committee provides a channel for APDU members to comment from the data user perspective.

Ken Hodges is your APDU representative on the 2010 Census Advisory Committee, and Bill O'Hare is your alternate representative. This report summarizes the October 21-22, 2010 meeting. Contact Ken ken.hodges@nielsen.com or Bill wohare@aecf.org with comments, questions, or suggestions.

ALERT: Comments needed. As described below, the 2010 Census Advisory Committee charter expires in February 2011, and Census Director Robert Groves has asked for input on how to restructure the CAC as focus shifts to the 2020 census. Your APDU representatives will be active in this process, and we would value input from APDU members. Specifically, we are interested in comments and suggestions related to the composition of the CAC, as well as its agenda and the way it interacts with the Census Bureau. Contact Ken ken.hodges@nielsen.com or Bill wohare@aecf.org with thoughts or suggestions to keep in mind as we work toward a restructured CAC.

OCTOBER 21-22 MEETING OF THE 2010 CENSUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Day One

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Dan Weinberg, the acting designated federal official, called the meeting to order with welcoming remarks. CAC chair Marc Morial and vice chair Pauline Medrano added their opening remarks, and introduced Commerce undersecretary Rebecca Blank as the first presenter.

Rebecca Blank. Undersecretary for Economic Affairs. Department of Commerce Blank commended the CAC representatives' contributions to the 2010 census effort, and noted that work already is turning to testing and planning for the 2020 census. Amid anticipation for 2010 census data, she pointed to recent data releases including poverty estimates and the 2009 ACS data. Blank also described "data synchronization" legislation that would permit greater data sharing between BEA and the Census Bureau – a boring topic for many, but which would enable significant improvements to data products. In coming years, Blank noted that the official poverty estimates based on the Current Population Survey will be supplemented with a measure that accounts for food, shelter, clothing, and utilities, in addition to income. The Undersecretary also described

recent reports on women owned businesses, Internet access, and the status of “Middle Class America.” She looks forward to the immediate goal of finishing 2010 census activities, but also to addressing long term issues related to data collection and data programs.

Karen Narasaki (Asian American Justice Center) asked about the prospects for a larger sample for the American Community Survey (ACS). Census Bureau Director Robert Groves explained that an increase is in the current budget request, but that agencies are currently operating under a continuing resolution that runs out in December, and it is not known if the final appropriation will be enough to support the larger sample.

Director’s Remarks

Robert Groves. Census Bureau Director

Groves reported that the 2010 census data are all in house, and are being processed. He described this as a relatively calming time compared with the nonresponse follow up (NRFU) phase when they had 600,000 workers in the field. He praised the NRFU workers as really special, and so productive that the Census Bureau is proud to be returning \$1.6 billion to the Treasury. The work now involves the identification of duplicate responses, and the handling of missing data in advance of the release of the apportionment counts and the PL 94-171 redistricting data. Groves also described the early (May 2011) release of group quarters counts (by type of GQ) that will give states the option of excluding prison populations from the redistricting process.

Groves commented that the world is changing in ways that challenge the ways we measure it, and that the typical reaction – working harder – is increasing costs to unsustainable levels. As he put it, “we have to change, or we will be changed.” The good news, he said, is the increasing demand for census information – an insatiable desire to know more about this country through statistics. And there are new technologies that offer the promise of new tools to address the challenges of data collection.

In this context, the Census Bureau has solicited proposals from staff on ways to innovate and improve Census operations. Invited to circumvent chains of command, Census staff submitted 675 proposals that have since been winnowed to a smaller number that will be funded with the goal of improving efficiency. As Groves described it, all Census Bureau budgets will be cut by one percent per year to fund the work toward greater efficiency – the expectation being that innovations need to show savings within three years.

Groves also described the objective of “destroying silos” by moving Census Bureau expertise to different divisions – giving senior staff broader experience. He described this as a move away from the tradition of advancing within a specific area to an emphasis on expertise in different areas.

Groves then described the launching of a new census directorate to work toward these changes, and suggested thinking about it as the 2020 directorate, which will grow, while the 2010 directorate shrinks. The objective is to establish a fresh organizational approach that reflects a number of new principles. For example, in contrast to the small number of

large tests in advance of the 2010 census, Groves sees a larger number of smaller tests providing greater flexibility and effectiveness. He also stresses the need to develop and use software systems in advance of the decennial census – in contrast to the risky approach of building systems just for the decennial. Accordingly, the ACS would be used as a vehicle for testing methods and systems in advance of the decennial census, and the ACS office will be moved into the 2020 census directorate. Groves described these as easy decisions to make, but acknowledged that making everything work will be a challenge.

Groves then expressed concern that the Census Bureau was about to hit data users with multiple data releases that could cause confusion. First will be the release of the 2010 Demographic Analysis (DA) estimates in early December – national level estimates of 2010 population by age and race that are independent of, and a basis for evaluating the census count. Also in December will be the release of the 5-year ACS estimates, which also are independent of the 2010 census, and provide data for small areas for the 2005-2009 period. The ACS release will be followed (by December 31) by the 2010 census apportionment counts – state population totals that do reflect the 2010 census. Groves expressed concern that journalists will become confused by the release of these numbers in quick succession, and asked for the CAC reps' help in clarifying the differences with reporters. CAC chair Marc Morial expressed concern that the anticipated confusion could lead to negative public opinion, and asked how the Census Bureau could minimize the impact. Groves noted that Steve Jost would describe communications efforts to head off confusion as varied data products are released.

Noting that Canada has made response to the long form portion of its census voluntary, and that the UK has decided that 2011 will be its last traditional census (switching to administrative data), Groves said countries are rethinking censuses in the face of increasing costs, concern over intrusion, and the availability of alternative resources. Concerns have been raised here about the ACS, and he noted that the Census Bureau is seeking ways to effectively communicate the benefits of the ACS.

Groves concluded with a discussion about the need to consider how the Census Advisory Committee can contribute to the planning for the 2020 census. The CAC's charter expires in February 2011, and Groves called for one more meeting, with the objective of defining a new and better structure for how the Committee operates. He reiterated his concern that the bureau often shares plans with the CAC only after it is too late to take advice, and asked that we recommend ways to set agendas, receive updates, and achieve more beneficial interaction. He suggested that we divide into groups, and have conference calls in preparation for the meeting, at which we would offer recommendations for an improved CAC model that would be robust to changes in administrations and census directors.

A lengthy period of discussion followed, with many reps thanking the director for his thoughtful remarks. Arturo Vargas (National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials) described confusion as many in the public incorrectly interpreting the reported mail participation rates as measures of census coverage. Groves agreed that

this is a widespread misinterpretation, and while Steve Jost (Census Associate Director for Communications) assured that that the communication of the final participation rates stresses that these are not coverage measures, the expectation is that many in the media will still get this wrong. Don Bradley (Housing Statistics Users Group) expressed concern over the increasing privatization of data for public policy work – wondering why private companies (whose products lack transparency) seem to be more efficient than federal agencies in accessing local government data. Groves acknowledged that private companies are “beating the pants off us” on delivery times, but suggested that their sometimes dubious focus on quality may contribute to their timely deliveries. Ilene Jacobs (California Rural Legal Assistance) expressed concern that the ACS not be allowed to take a back seat to the decennial in future CAC deliberations – a sentiment echoed by several other reps. Kim Brace (Election Data Services) asked if the Census Bureau is considering a review of residence rules in response to the prison population issue (which once again was the subject of a pre-meeting mailing to CAC reps). Groves said that work on residence rules is inevitable, but cautioned there are tricky conceptual challenges to defining where prisoners came from before they were incarcerated.

2020 Census Planning: Research and Testing Proposals

Dan Weinberg. Assistant Director for American Community Survey and Decennial Census

At this point, the meeting was well behind schedule, so Weinberg presented his material quickly. He showed a slide tracking the rapid increase in per household census costs (in 2010 dollars) from \$14 in 1970 to \$70 in 2000, an estimated \$98 in 2010 and a projected \$156 for 2020. The increase is considered unsustainable, and the containment of costs at the 2010 per household level is an overriding goal for the 2020 census. Factors driving costs (and proposed remedies) include 1) increased population diversity and decreased willingness to participate (reduce by expanding, automating and tailoring self response methods, and more use of administrative records), 2) need for address canvassing (update MAF continuously, and conduct canvassing only in targeted areas), 3) failure to link acquisitions, schedule and budget (take a rolling approach to census and budget planning), and 4) the demand for absolute accuracy (build a consensus among stakeholders regarding the tradeoff between accuracy and cost).

The tradeoff between census accuracy and cost is a sensitive topic, and Weinberg said a public discussion is needed as plans for 2020 develop.

Again, time was short, so Weinberg described only briefly the winnowing process for 2020 research topics and how they are prioritized against the 2020 guiding principles. He also touched on the major options being considered as alternatives for the 2020 census design. These include 1) address canvassing (full as in 2010, targeted, or no canvassing), 2) enumeration (6 options ranging from traditional to administrative data only), and 3) IT and operational infrastructure (centralized as in 2010, decentralized, or hybrid). For example, one possible combination of options would be a plan that calls for targeted canvassing, multi-mode self-enumeration with some use of administrative records, and fewer local census offices. There is a sense of urgency for the testing program, as critical decisions need to be made by 2015 to avoid problems experienced in the past.

Discussants

Ken Hodges (Association of Public Data Users), the session's first discussant, observed that the traditional census goals – a complete and accurate count, embraced and valued results, efficiency, and effective management – now carry the asterisk of the overriding goal of cost containment. He suggested that the emphasis on costs and efficiency will make some stakeholders nervous that data quality could be sacrificed to reduce costs – despite Census Bureau assurances to the contrary. Hodges noted that the 2020 plan is premised on the idea that increasing census costs threaten to divert resources from efforts to achieve a complete count, and that there are two types of census costs. First are costs that contribute to the count of hard to count populations (such as bilingual forms and targeted messaging), and second are costs that do not contribute to a better count (such as paper versus electronic data collection). Thus, savings related to operations would seem not to jeopardize the count. Hodges wondered how real this distinction is, and whether enough operational savings could be realized to achieve the goal of holding 2020 costs at the 2010 per household level. The 2020 tests should address those questions, and Hodges suggested the CAC will want to follow the results closely. He also wondered how much increase in census costs the Bureau would be willing to absorb to maintain the quality of the count.

Kim Brace (EDS), the second discussant, described the possibility of a Republican majority following the 2010 elections as “the elephant in the room” that could have an impact on the quality versus cost tradeoff. Brace also stressed the importance of geography, and the significant savings to be realized with the modernization of TIGER, greater use of parcel data, and greater Census Bureau coordination with the US Postal Service and local governments.

The discussion that followed focused on the quality vs. cost tradeoff, with some reps articulating the civil rights obligations behind a complete count, and observing that we will not see a reduction in hard to count populations and hard to locate housing. Others noted that we on the CAC often propose measures that would increase costs, and that perhaps we should give more consideration to costs.

In response, Dan Weinberg stressed the Census Bureau's commitment to reducing the differential undercount, and argued that there are savings to be achieved from innovations that make it easier for hard to count populations to respond. For example, the Internet option will make it easier to offer census “forms” in many languages other than English and Spanish. The point, he said, is that we need a public discussion on these matters. Director Groves said the Census Bureau's role is to report openly the cost impacts of all design alternatives that are considered – that all groups need to be talking about both quality and cost reduction, and that we need to determine how best to structure that conversation.

Restructuring Research at the Census Bureau

Roderick Little. Associate Director for Research and Methodology and Chief Scientist

Little joined the Census Bureau from the University of Michigan to head up the “new research directorate,” and brings highly regarded expertise in survey research methods, with a particular interest in missing data and sampling inference. An organization chart for the new directorate featured its five centers – economic studies, statistical research, methods research, disclosure (avoidance) research, and administrative records and applications. The new directorate was formed because good government requires timely and useful data, and because statistical agencies face challenges related to declining survey response rates, growing demand for their data products, and increased competition from rival estimation systems. Little said he has much to learn about the census environment, but expressed his belief that the biostatistics model (his background) has much to offer. He stressed the importance of collaboration between Census Bureau and external researchers, the challenge of recruiting the best researchers, and promoting research excellence in a large production-oriented bureaucratic institution, such as the Census Bureau. As part of this effort, Little said they need the CAC’s help – and look to the committee for valuable advice and constructive criticism.

Geographic Support System: FY11 and Beyond
Tim Trainor, Geography Division

During this lunch presentation, Trainor described the Geographic Support System as an initiative before Congress for increased funding to improve the addresses in the Master Address File (MAF). He said the initiative is an important response to stakeholder and oversight recommendations to update and maintain address and spatial data with a special focus on rural areas, group quarters, and Puerto Rico. The initiative reflects a shift in focus from the full address canvass for the 2010 census to targeted canvassing for 2020 – a shift that hinges on establishing an “acceptable” address list from each level of government.

The objective is to improve overall address coverage beyond the sources that contributed to the 2010 list – the USPS delivery sequence file (DSF), the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program, and census field updates. Additional sources will focus on the best available data from government sources and commercial files, with attention to whether addresses are mailable, deliverable, locatable, and geocodable. Challenges include the current decentralized address system that lacks address standards, the constraints of working with MAF partners in the Title 13 environment, and the fact that not all census addresses are in the USPS DSF. In fact Trainor noted that 13 percent of census addresses never appeared on any DSF (as far back as 1997). Trainor also described work toward a continuous updating of the street network and other features, improvements to boundary files, and other quality improvements – many of which will benefit from collaboration with outside experts.

Discussant:

Kim Brace (EDS) said the initiative sounds great, but we need to know more about it. He described the buy in of potential partners as key to the initiative’s success, and citing the increased use of GIS in cell phones, and geo-targeting in business, Brace called for more focus on the placing of people. He also wondered about the distribution of the 13 percent of census addresses that were not in the USPS DSF. Did those addresses tend to be

urban, suburban or rural? Brace recommended that work on the initiative begin as soon as possible, in order to tap government staff who worked on census programs (before they leave for other jobs), and meeting with mayors and other officials while they are still thinking about the census.

In response to a question about 2000-2010 geographic correspondence, Dan Weinberg noted that the Census Bureau is looking into the possibility of retabulating much of the 2000 census data for 2010 boundaries.

2010 Census Operations Recap

Moderated by CAC Chair Marc Morial

Decennial Operation: Arnold Jackson. Associate Director for Decennial Census

Jackson started with a review of some 2010 census innovations, such as the short form only census, handheld computers for address canvassing, and the bilingual and replacement questionnaires. He also briefly reviewed the NRFU, re-interview, vacant-delete, field verification, coverage follow up, data capture operations. Ongoing activities include data processing, edits and imputation, closing field offices and regional census centers, completing the coverage measurement program, releasing 2010 census data products, and completing the census program for evaluation and experiments (CPEX).

Jackson's "What Worked Well?" slide cited the 74 percent mail participation rate, research contributing to targeted messaging for hard-to-count populations, improved recruiting for the temporary workforce, and improved quality assurance efforts. He also touted the development of an address list which came in very close to expected totals.

Arturo Vargas (NALEO) noted the importance of communicating good news of this type to census stakeholders.

Measuring America: Steve Jost. Associate Director for Communications

Jost presented survey data tracking public awareness of and intent to participate in the census – during the pre and post Census Day periods. He recounted the successes of the advertising campaign, and alerted the reps to watch for reports on the evaluations of the communications campaign. Jost also cited the success of the partnership program, the road tour (which yielded much free media exposure), and the 2010 census website, that received over 34 million visits through May 2010. He credited the use of social media in countering anti-census campaigns

Jost also assured that the Census Bureau is preparing materials to prevent confusion over the varied data releases planned for the coming months – including a chart summarizing the basic differences between the releases.

Communications challenges ahead include new research initiatives, a second iteration of census barriers, attitudes and motivators survey, research on the Census in Schools partnership, and work on the future of "census.gov." The objective, he said, is to completely overhaul and improve the way census data are presented to the public.

Another priority is building the advertising and communications program (ADCOM) for the future. The five major goals are to expand trust in the Census Bureau, redefine what is meant by “data user,” make data more accessible (across diverse cultures and ethnicities), lead innovation on data animation and visualization; and exploit new communications mediums, such as social media, in a multicultural world. As Jost noted, the paid advertising for the 2010 census is over – the program needs to exploit free publicity now. A broader objective is to lay the groundwork for an even better communications program for the 2020 census, and to make the Census Bureau a “go to” destination (like Google and Wikipedia) for information about the US.

In the discussion that followed, the committee asked to see the materials being prepared to minimize confusion about the upcoming data releases.

Partnerships and Outreach: Tim Olson, Field Division

Olson thanked the CAC for its guidance in the partnership program, which turned out to be much bigger than expected. Partnership staffing peaked from July 2009 to May 2010 at 1,000 specialists and 3,000 assistants – numbers made higher by stimulus funding. Over 250,000 organizations served as census partners, and provided more than \$1.1 billion in value-added contributions to the census effort – such as training and testing space, volunteer hours, donated advertising and hosted events. Often these contributions involved real expense to the partner organizations.

Olson described the “March to the Mailbox” event that promoted response to over a quarter of a million people in low response census tracts, and in the process, generated valuable publicity, and gave partners an opportunity for tangible engagement. The Census Bureau is conducting partner debriefings to identify things that worked well, and problems that need to be addressed for the 2020 census. Among the lessons learned are that partnership staffing was excellent, and the road tour, March to the Mailbox, and 2010 website were major successes. On the downside, promotional materials often arrived later than planned, and limited their effectiveness. And while coordination between Census headquarters and the local offices was better than 2000, improvement is needed. A November-December 2010 survey of 7,500 partner organizations will yield results contributing to 2020 planning. For fiscal year 2011, 72 partnership staff will remain, and efforts will transition to services in support of the ACS and other Census Bureau data products.

CAC chair Marc Morial urged the Census Bureau to promote at every opportunity, the \$1.1 billion savings enabled or implied by the partner contributions. Ken Hodges (APDU) asked if that figure might be low as some contributions may have been unreported and unrecorded. Olson said the figure is almost certainly low, and added that they were deliberately conservative in estimating the dollar value of contributions such as office space.

Closing Remarks: Marc Morial

In response to Director Groves’ request that the Committee prepare for a February meeting to explore revised structures for CAC input, Chair Marc Morial proposed that the

reps split into two subgroups – the first to consider the size and organizational composition of the future CAC, and the second to consider the scope, agenda, and scheduling of future CAC meetings. Your APDU representative volunteered to serve on the subcommittee on scope, agenda and schedule.

The subcommittees will meet by conference call for initial brainstorming, and the subcommittees will meet jointly before presenting proposals to the Census Bureau at the yet-to-be-scheduled February meeting.

Day Two

CAC Vice Chair Pauline Medrano chaired the meeting in the absence of Chair Marc Morial.

Assessing Differences in Estimates Between a Mandatory and a Voluntary American Community Survey

Alfredo Navarro. Decennial Statistical Studies Division

Navarro explained that ACS response has always been mandatory, but that in response to a congressional request, the Census Bureau conducted a 2003 test to determine if the ACS could be implemented as a voluntary survey. The test found that mail response dropped from 60 percent to 39 percent, telephone response from 81 to 67 percent, and in person response from 96 to 89 percent. With fewer households responding by mail (in the voluntary ACS), more were subject to sampling for follow up, and thus fewer interviews were completed. And with more in person interviewing required, the cost of a voluntary ACS would be 38 percent higher than the mandatory survey.

In the face of these findings, Congress dropped pressure for a voluntary ACS, but interest has resurfaced with the Republican National Committee's resolution to eliminate the ACS, or make it voluntary. There is also proposed legislation (bill HR 3131) that would make ACS response voluntary.

Navarro described the proposal for new research to address the question of whether a voluntary ACS would produce results different from those of a mandatory survey – a question unanswered by the earlier research. The research would produce ACS estimates from two panels (one mandatory and the other voluntary), and compare the resulting estimates for three points in time: 1) after weighting for probability of selection only, 2) after noninterview adjustments only, and 3) after final weighting to population controls. Analyses will be at the national level, and for selected strata, and Navarro said they are considering the possibility of analyses for small area estimates.

Discussant:

Ilene Jacobs (California Rural Legal Assistance) wondered how useful the national estimates would be, and suggested greater focus on the impact on ACS estimates of specific populations – such as race and ethnic minorities. She also expressed concern

about the genesis of the request, and wondered if making the ACS voluntary would diminish its current official status to that of just another federal survey.

While the 2003 study was a response to congressional pressure, and there is renewed congressional interest in a voluntary ACS, Director Groves stressed that the genesis of the additional research was internal, and rested with him. With respect to minority populations, Navarro explained that the 2003 study found that with voluntary response, larger proportions of minority populations shifted from mail to follow up response. As a result more minority respondents were subject to sampling, and fewer minority interviews were completed.

Kim Brace (EDS) asked if the 2003 study found differences by subject matter. Navarro said some statistically significant differences were observed, but that these were not of practical significance. The proposed research will focus more on differences in the ACS estimates of characteristics. When Navarro asked if there are characteristics of particular interest, Karen Narasaki (Asian American Justice Center) cited English language proficiency, and Stacy Kelly, (American Foundation for the Blind) noted the importance of data on disability.

Congressional Update

Angela Manso, Census Congressional Affairs Office

Manso explained that the government is operating under a continuing resolution for FY 2011, and expressed hope that the eventual appropriation for the Census Bureau will be enough to cover the proposed increase in the ACS sample size. There is talk of across the board cuts, but much uncertainty over where cuts would be taken. Manso confirmed that, in addition to the RNC resolution to eliminate or make the ACS voluntary, bill HR 3131 (introduced by congressman Poe of Texas) would make response to the ACS voluntary. The bill is not expected to make it out of committee, but Manso cautioned that the election results could impact its prospects.

Don Bradley (HSUG) wondered if the ACS could be mandatory if it is not really part of the constitutionally required census. Manso responded that the constitutional questions have been settled, and suggested that concerns over privacy and intrusion are likely the bigger threats to the ACS. Noting that individual census responses are made public after 72 years, Clark Bensen (POLIDATA) asked if that was the case with ACS data. Dan Weinberg commented that the Census Bureau's understanding with Archives on ACS is the same as that covering the census. There was additional discussion of the voluntary ACS test, and questions about how the results would be reported and used. Director Groves confirmed that there would be a report, but stressed that it would be a technical report, not a political document.

Redistricting

Catherine McCully, Census Redistricting Office

McCully started with a review of the constitutional and legal requirements for census data (including redistricting), and like others, expressed concern with potential confusion over the upcoming releases of census and ACS data. She also described the interest in

ACS data items for redistricting work – for example, citizenship status, which is not asked on the census (and thus, not on the redistricting file), but which is of interest as it relates to voter eligibility. The ACS asks citizenship status, and the Department of Justice has requested a special ACS tabulation of citizenship of the voting age population (CVAP) by race and Hispanic origin at the block group level (the smallest level for which ACS data are provided). McCully reported that the Census Bureau will produce and provide such a tabulation in early 2011.

The state flow release of TIGER/Line and geographic shape files is due to begin in November 2010 and be completed by the end of January 2011, and McCully said we can expect an increase from 8.2 million blocks in 2000 to about 11 million in 2010. The state flow release of the PL 94-171 redistricting files is due to begin in early February 2011, with all files released by the end of March. The advance group quarters (by type of GQ) data that some states will use in redistricting will be released in May 2011 (via FTP only). New to the PL 94 file this decade are school districts, separate counts of vacant and occupied housing, voting district maps, 2010 census tract reference maps, and 2010 census school district maps.

The delivery of the PL 94-171 files is not a simple matter. The Census Bureau is currently collecting addresses for the state officials who are to receive the files, but these could change following the elections – which include 37 governor and 6,315 legislative races. The Census Bureau has to secure the correct names and addresses in advance of the PL 94-171 deliveries, and as McCully put it, “we can’t get this wrong.” Within each state, the data must be delivered in a non-partisan manner, with the Census Bureau shipping to both parties at the same time, and confirming receipt. The process is complicated by the fact that many states want the data delivered to vendors who do their redistricting work.

McCully described the timing of these deliveries. For each release, the Census Redistricting Data Office will ship data Monday – Thursdays and confirm bi-partisan receipt Tuesdays through Fridays. As soon as bi-partisan receipt by the states is confirmed, the data will be made available to the public on American FactFinder.

In response to a question about the margins of error (MOE) for the block group CVAP special tabulation, McCully explained that they will not be known until the tabulation is produced, but that we can expect them to be large. Dan Weinberg pointed out that we can expect large MOEs for all ACS block group estimates, and that the rationale is that block groups will serve as building blocks for custom aggregations where MOEs will be much smaller. Ken Hodges (APDU) noted that special tabulation products suppress data for areas with too few responses (for example, fewer than 50 unweighted sample records), and asked if the Department of Justice special tabulation would be an exception. McCully was definite that suppression would be applied, and Hodges observed that the many suppressed block groups would impair their use as building blocks to custom aggregations. Clark Bensen (POLIDATA) inquired about the timing of the 2000-2010 geographic correspondence file. McCully was not sure of the exact timing, but confirmed that it would not be part of the November-January TIGER release, and

reminded us that the recently completed enhancements to TIGER spatial precision will make it difficult to compare 2000 and 2010 census boundaries.

Director's Closing Comments

Census Director Groves was present for most of the meeting, but noted that he had missed the discussion of the future of the CAC, and reiterated his commitment to working with the Committee on its future form. When asked for his thoughts on the scope of the CAC, Groves said he would like to incorporate input from local organizations channeled through the national CAC. He described it as regionalizing the advisory process, and suggested it would be a way to keep the partnership process going. He also stressed the importance of having people in the same room with opposing ideas, saying that the Census Bureau really needs to hear both sides of issues. Saying that “size matters,” Groves commented that the CAC needs a diversity of perspectives, but has to guard against having so many reps that the opportunity to comment is impaired. And once again, the Director encouraged the reps to not hold back in their critique of the Census Bureau and how it can better serve the advisory process.

Committee Assessment of Meeting Content/Recommendations:

Moderator: Pauline Medrano

In this session, reps expressed regret that the meeting had not devoted more attention to the ACS – including plans for ACS communications, and efforts to ensure that the ACS sampling frame includes hard to locate housing units. It was also suggested that the Census Bureau's estimates program be a future topic, given its importance to ACS weights. And there were suggestions that the Census Bureau spend less time presenting material already provided, and which the CAC reps should have read in advance.

Public Comment

Heather McGhee of Demos called the counting of prisoners at their place of incarceration a form of gerrymandering that distorts representative democracy. She expressed the organization's appreciation for the advance group quarters file that will enable states to eliminate prison populations from redistricting, but called on the Census Bureau to undertake research to enable the counting of prison populations at their pre-incarceration address.

With no other CAC or public comments, Dan Weinberg adjourned the meeting.