



**PREPARED STATEMENT OF
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2010 Census: A Status Update of Key Decennial Operations

**Before the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
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Chairman Clay, Ranking Member McHenry, members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you and provide an operational update for the 2010 Census, including the status of the Paper-Based Operational Control System (or PBOCS, as we refer to this system).

Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure you that we are underway and proceeding along a path to a successful census—as the efforts of the past several years, including the support of this committee and census stakeholders are now paying dividends.

From his first day in office, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke has made it a priority for the Census Bureau to carry out a complete and accurate count of the 2010 Census and to ensure that we do so through a robust operational system. It is worth noting, however, that an accurate and complete census is not achieved through a single operation. The census is complex and reflects the rich diversity of our nation—from the native villages of remote Alaska to the multi-storied apartment buildings of our cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta, and St. Louis. Since we are a nation of many faces, many ages, and many circumstances, the Census Bureau must

implement many strategies to reach every person living in America. These strategies, or operations, include different enumeration operations such as the mailing out of the census forms, Update/Enumerate, and Update/Leave, as well as specialized Group Quarters Enumeration procedures. To support these operations, we rely on partnerships, promotion, and assistance programs, including the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance, Questionnaire Assistance Centers, and the Integrated Communications Program. All of these efforts, from census operations to promotion, are based on thorough research, extensive coordination and preparation, and most importantly local knowledge in the form of partners and a locally-recruited workforce. And although each has undergone rigorous development and testing, the sheer magnitude of the task means that we do not expect everything to function perfectly. We have management information systems to detect problems and then correct them as soon as possible.

Recruitment is an integral part of the operational successes we have experienced so far this year. As of last week, the Local Census Offices (LCO) have recruited approximately 3.4 million people. The ultimate recruiting goal is 3.7 million people by April 25, 2010, for the 1.2 million positions that will be needed for the operations we will conduct this spring, including the Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU) operation. We recruit this workforce through local community organizations, churches, and advertising, and we rely on this locally-recruited workforce to serve as enumerators, crew leaders, field operations supervisors, clerks, and assistants, as well as LCO-management staff. We know that people are more likely to open their doors to people from their own neighborhood, so the 2010 Census workforce is the most diverse and qualified workforce the Census Bureau has ever recruited.

Many of those hired will work on several operations, including those operations I would like to discuss today as I focus on our current 2010 Census activities, including: Remote Alaska; Group Quarters Advance Visit and Group Quarters Enumeration; Update/Leave; Update/Enumerate; Mailout/Mailback; and our preparation for NRFU. I will also discuss our efforts to promote and support the census, including operational control system all the LCOs use—the PBOCS.

Remote Alaska Update/Enumerate...The "First Enumeration"

The official start of the 2010 Census enumeration began on January 25, 2010, in Noorvik, Alaska. The Remote Alaska operation reflects the unique weather and geographic challenges inherent to an enumeration of approximately 30,000 housing units located in Native Alaskan and remote villages from the Arctic Circle to the Aleutian Chain. We conduct the enumeration between January and April in order to reach the villages

before the ice melts and villagers disperse to go hunting and fishing during the warmer months. While it is a small operation, Remote Alaska piques the interest and imagination of the country each decade as we travel by small plane, snow mobile, and dog sled to ensure that the census is indeed a count of every person living in America. The Census Bureau Director Robert Groves traveled to Noorvik and joined the village celebration for the “First Enumeration” and the resulting news coverage reached an audience of over 80 million people, supplementing the promotional messages for the 2010 Census and supporting the operational efforts throughout the country.

Group Quarters Advance Visit and Group Quarters Enumeration

The Group Quarters population includes residents of institutional facilities, such as prisons, jails, and nursing homes, and non-institutional facilities, such as college dormitories and military barracks. The Group Quarters Enumeration, which begins at the end of this month with the Shipboard Enumeration, is actually the culmination of several operations, including the Group Quarters Validation, conducted last fall to verify the locations and contact information for Group Quarters, and the Group Quarters Advance Visit, the most recent operation. Group Quarters Advance Visit is a crucial step in the process of counting group quarters residents. Beginning at the end of January, census workers visited more than 270,000 group quarters locations, where they consulted with administrators, managers, and staff to develop a plan for the enumeration. The enumerators will work with the facility to obtain an Individual Census Report (ICR), which is the individual census “form,” for each of the residents of the group quarter.

<i>Group Quarters Advance Visit at a Glance</i>	
Dates	Week of 31 January – Week of 15 March 2010
Total Field Staff	7182
Initial Workload	240,224
Total Current Workload (includes units added during the operation)	271,233

This is an important step, as group quarters vary dramatically depending on their purpose. The Census Bureau provides alternative procedures to the administrators so that the enumeration can be conducted safely and accurately, and in a manner that minimizes the inconvenience to the staff and residents. For instance, an administrator can choose to provide administrative data for the facility to the census workers, who then fill out the forms. Another alternative is that a Census Bureau Crew Leader may

provide all the materials needed for the facility’s staff to conduct the enumeration. In this instance, each member of the facility staff involved in the enumeration must take the Oath of Non-Disclosure and be sworn for life to protect and maintain the confidentiality of the data collected. Group Quarters Advance Visit provided an opportunity for the Census Bureau to work with each facility in advance to explain the operation and answer the facility’s questions, which in turn should facilitate the Group Quarters Enumeration, which will be conducted throughout the United States starting in April 2010. The Group Quarters Advance Visit was successfully completed on time and under budget.

Update/Leave and Update/Enumerate

For approximately 90 percent of the housing units in the United States, the census form was delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. For the remaining housing units, including those in Remote Alaska, the Census Bureau will use the Update/Leave and Update/Enumerate strategies to ensure that everyone is counted in the census. During the decade, the Census Bureau’s Regional Offices worked closely with Headquarters to identify the best strategy for enumeration in each area.

The Update/Leave enumeration began March 1, 2010, and we are completing the production work this week—on schedule and under budget. We conduct this operation in areas where the “address” may not reflect the actual location of the housing unit or that do not receive either regular or at-home mail delivery, as well as those areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita given the complex and ever-changing housing inventory. In this operation, census enumerators canvassed the assignment areas to update the address list and census maps and also left a questionnaire for the approximately 11.1 million housing units to return by mail.

<i>Update/Leave Visit at a Glance (to date)</i>	
Dates	1 March – 26 March 2010
Total Field Staff	60,838
Initial Workload	10,399,379
Total Current Workload (includes units added during the operation)	11,127,335

Update/Enumerate began on March 22, 2010, and continues through the end of May 2010. In this operation, enumerators canvass assignment areas to update census address and map information, and enumerate approximately two million housing units. This method of direct enumeration is primarily used in areas with seasonal housing

(and therefore, potentially, a high number of vacant housing units), American Indian areas, and the colonias in South Texas. As previously mentioned, Remote Alaska is an Update/Enumerate operation, and there are other similarly remote areas in the United States that require special travel and other considerations, such as the northern most area of Maine.

<i>Update/Enumerate Visit at a Glance (to date)</i>	
Dates	22 March – 29 May 2010
Total Field Staff	(presently hiring and training staff)
Initial Workload	2,113,644

Mailout/Mailback and Participation Rates

The vast majority of housing units—more than 120 million—received their questionnaires in the mail last week. Mailout/Mailback is a multi-staged strategy designed to promote census participation. This strategy included an Advance Letter (March 8-10), the Questionnaire (March 15-17), a Reminder Postcard (March 22-24), and for some areas where we anticipate a low response rate, a Replacement Questionnaire (which will be delivered starting April 3, 2010). For the first time, we will send a “blanket” replacement questionnaire to approximately 25 million housing units in tracts that had a Census 2000 response rate of less than 59 percent. We will send a “targeted” replacement questionnaire to approximately 15 million housing units in census tracts that had a Census 2000 response rate of less than 67 percent. The remaining non-responding households in “high response” tracts will not receive a replacement questionnaire, mainly because of our inability to remove “late mail returns” from NRFU and the limited capacity of the private sector printers for this large-scale short-turnaround operation.

The 2010 Census also includes a Bilingual English/Spanish questionnaire—which is a census first. The bilingual questionnaire was sent to approximately 12 million housing units in tracts where at least 20 percent of the occupied housing units require Spanish language assistance. This assessment is based on data from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey questions “Language Spoken at Home” and “Ability to Speak English.” Additionally, the census form is available by request in Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese and the Census Bureau has created 59 Language Assistance Guides. All of these efforts have been promoted on the 2010census.gov website, by our partners, and through a direct mail postcard that was sent to approximately nine million housing units.

These efforts—from the mailing strategy to the promotion efforts—are intended to encourage participation. We are also promoting the mailback through a very special challenge. The Census Bureau has issued the “Take 10 Challenge” to encourage every household to take 10 minutes to complete the census form and mail it back so that they can be counted. We will post the daily participation rates along with maps for states and localities on the 2010census.gov site, including St. Louis, Missouri and Cherryville, NC. We hope to stir up some friendly competition as browsers can not only compare the results for their community to Census 2000 but also to the 2010 Census participation rates for communities across the country.

Assistance and Outreach Efforts

Participation is the foundation to an accurate and complete census and it has practical implications for the cost of the census as well, as the response rate sets the stage for the NRFU operation. For these reasons, we have undertaken unprecedented assistance and outreach efforts to promote participation that range from Telephone Questionnaire Assistance, the 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers, and Language Assistance Guides, where respondents can get direct assistance in completing the census forms to the Integrated Communications Program, which encourages participation through partnership and advertising with messages about the importance, safety, and simplicity of the 2010 Census.

The goal of the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance program, which is a part of the Decennial Response Integration System (DRIS) contract, is to provide a convenient way for respondents to get answers to basic questions about the census. There are five Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Call Centers where we rely on both Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology and live operator response modes in six languages and TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf), as well as separate lines for Puerto Rico and for people receiving experimental forms. Our goal is to quickly provide assistance—whether it is answering a question, sending a Language Assistance Guide, or sending a replacement form. According to the standard metrics for this industry such as “Average Speed to Answer” (which is the average time it takes an operator to answer a call) and “Average Time to Abandon” (which is the average time it takes for a caller to “hang up” prior to reaching an agent), the program is on track and doing well. We are pleased with the implementation of this program and will continue to monitor its productivity and provide the committee with updates.

<i>Telephone Questionnaire Assistance at a Glance (to date)</i>	
Call Centers Total	5
- Sandy, UT	2
- Lawrence, KS	1
- Monticello, KY	1
- Phoenix, AZ	1
Total Calls Overall	864,756
Average Speed to Answer Overall	5 seconds
Average Time to Abandon Overall	226 seconds

Telephone questionnaire assistance is not the only means of assistance. The Census Bureau also established more than 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers throughout the country where respondents can get individual help filling out the form. These centers, which are staffed by sworn Census Bureau employees, opened on March 19, 2010, in Mailout/Mailback areas, and even earlier in Update/Leave areas. Anyone looking for a center can visit 2010census.gov to search for the nearest center using a Google map search. Each site will be listed including the address and the specific hours and days of the week when it is open. Additionally, the Questionnaire Assistance Centers also serve as Be Counted sites where someone can pick up a census form if for some reason they think they were not included on the census form at their address or they did not receive a census form. These and an additional 10,000 Be Counted sites are also operational from March 19th through April 19th.

<i>Questionnaire Assistance Centers and Be Counted Sites at a Glance (to date)</i>	
Questionnaire Assistance Centers/Be Counted Sites	29,963
Be Counted Sites (additional)	9978

The most visible way we are promoting participation is through the Integrated Communications Program, which includes both advertising and partnerships. The advertising program which kicked off January 19, 2010, with awareness messaging, has now moved to the all-important motivation messaging to encourage response: "We Can't Move Forward Until You Mail it Back." The motivation messaging phase features advertising in 28 languages around the theme "March to the Mailbox." The overall campaign has been successful and we were encouraged by recent public opinion data from Zogby International, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, and Ipsos all indicate both high levels of awareness and intent to complete the census.

These data are consistent with the Census Bureau's internal data and confirm the overall direction of the campaign.

We are tracking the campaign closely and are considering additional funding from existing resources to augment the advertising campaign to address certain gaps. For instance, we are concerned that as a result of the current economy, many people find themselves in unexpected housing arrangements and are displaced from their typical living quarters, living with friends or relatives or living in transitory locations, such as campgrounds or parks. We will work closely with the contractor, DraftFCB, to assess this and other needs.

Non-Response Follow Up (NRFU)

Our goal with these and other efforts is simply to reach as many people as possible and to encourage participation. By increasing the response rate, we reduce the workload for NRFU. NRFU is by far the largest operation and a major portion of the census infrastructure and budget is dedicated to it. In a matter of five weeks, on May 1, 2010, approximately 700,000 temporary census takers will begin to visit those housing units that did not respond to the census. We estimate that between 46.9 and 55.3 million housing units must be enumerated during NRFU and that we will be in the field through late-July.

It is important to note that we are better prepared than in any previous census. We have surpassed our recruiting goals, have a highly qualified applicant pool, and we will have specific advertising for NRFU to promote cooperation with the census takers, as well as over 216,000 active partners who will also reinforce this message of cooperation with the enumerators. In addition, we have done a comprehensive reevaluation of the NRFU cost estimation model. We performed this analysis to determine whether the current budget for NRFU was adequate to successfully complete operations.

The FY 2010 enacted budget is based on cost estimates using a number of components that were developed early in the decade or were revisited when the decision was made to go back to paper operations. The components include staff productivity, the number of cases requiring follow up, and cost drivers such as salary and mileage. The baseline budgeted for NRFU was \$2.74 billion.

However, as the census approached, our knowledge of these components improved based on additional experience and data. These included experiences such as Address Canvassing and Group Quarters Validation as well as revisiting Census 2000 observations and experiences. We also worked with a panel of experts in both

headquarters and field operations to determine the impact of this information on cost drivers. This process led us to identify components that needed to be updated and those that could remain as part of the original estimate. The components that emerged as areas for the greatest concern were workload and productivity due to their high uncertainty and impact on costs. Working with subject matter experts, we developed several likely alternative cost scenarios for these components, and we have recently briefed your staffs on the details of this effort.

The analysis indicates that NRFU operations can very likely be completed within the original budget despite external factors that we believe will increase NRFU workload and lower productivity. The ability to fit within budget in light of new information would not have been possible without changes to the NRFU operations, including the management decision to maintain the 2009 hourly salary levels, rather than increase them in FY 2010 according to the original plan, which was based on assessment of current employment and economic conditions.

We have also closely reviewed the budgets for the NRFU reinterview operation and the Vacancy/Delete Check operation, and we will continue to monitor changing external conditions and update each estimate as more information becomes available.

Paper-Based Operations Control System (PBOCS)

While the 2010 Census is proceeding smoothly overall, we are not without concerns—especially as we prepare for NRFU. One of the primary concerns is for stability and functionality of the Paper-Based Operations Control System (PBOCS), as well as for the Decennial Applicant Personnel and Payroll System (DAPPS). Both systems are essential for NRFU, as they are used to control the workflow (in the case of PBOCS) and to support and administer payroll for the temporary workforce (in the case of DAPPS).

The Census Bureau undertook the development of the PBOCS following the re-scope of the Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) contract in 2008 and with the decision to proceed with a paper-based census. At that time, the Census Bureau openly acknowledged the risk we had accepted in assuming the development and implementation of this system in such a compressed timeframe. But we felt that such risk was lower than the alternative (proceeding with the existing FDCA contract) and we have maintained a “high risk” rating for the PBOCS. The compressed time schedule has resulted in abbreviated testing cycles, which occur much closer to operations than we would have preferred, in higher levels of defects when we release the system into production, and in functionality trade-offs and workarounds.

But we are managing the risks and communicating openly with internal stakeholders, and with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO), who have provided valuable insights and recommendations. All of the operations previously mentioned were supported successfully with the PBOCS, but we remain vigilant and have established key processes to monitor the program. The 2010 Census Application Readiness and Infrastructure Stability (ARIS) group and the PBOCS Steering Committee both meet on a daily basis to resolve resource issues and decide priorities. The ARIS groups reports to me, to the Associate Director of Field Operations, and to the Chief Information Officer, and we provide weekly status reports to the Director and Deputy Director. ARIS provides focused, centralized leadership and coordination of efforts to finalize the PBOCS applications. It is this group's responsibility to reallocate resources, resolve conflicting priorities, and maintain the system-related schedules and plans. The Steering Committee represents key stakeholder divisions and manages risks as they relate to the development, testing, and operational implementation. The Steering Committee is also responsible for prioritizing development activities and resolution of defects, as well as establishing workarounds when needed such as staggering start times for logging onto the PBOCS or printing materials at headquarters or the National Processing Center.

In addition to the support of ARIS and the Steering Committee, the Census Bureau is also reinforcing PBOCS in several other key efforts as we work 24-7 to ensure that the system is set for NRFU. We have reinforced both the PBOCS production and COOP (Continuity of Operations) hardware environments and have enhanced the technical support and procedures through the Help Desk and we have revised documentation. Additionally, DAPPS, our critical payroll and personnel management system was migrated to an enhanced environment, enabling us to continue secure, reliable selection, hiring, and pay processing as we approach NRFU.

The Census Bureau remains cautiously optimistic for successful implementation of the PBOCS. I am personally encouraged by the staff and contractor dedication. In the last couple of weeks I have overseen the successful installation of new hardware, a decreasing number of defects, and increasing user capacity; these are all indicators that day-by-day the system is maturing. It is also important to acknowledge that the PBOCS is functioning and currently supporting our operations and we are working through issues, including recent difficulties in updating the Cost and Progress System, which we use to track cost and productivity. The PBOCS was effectively used for Remote Alaska, Group Quarters Validation, and Update/Leave, and it is being used for Update/Enumerate. All of these operations began on time and were managed successfully with the PBOCS, despite any issues—and that gives me confidence when I consider the next several months.

Conclusion

Over the next several months, hundreds of important tasks must be completed across all components of the decennial census program, including data capture, NRFU, Vacant Delete Check, and later activities—all leading to the ultimate delivery of the apportionment data at the end of December and redistricting data in February and March. As I mentioned earlier, I believe we are on a path to success and that we can successfully meet the challenges and risks we face. We will have bumps along the way – every census since 1790 has had them—and we promise to be quick to fix the problems as they arise. Your continued support is crucial to a successful census and I look forward to working with you in the coming months.

I thank the subcommittee for this opportunity and would be happy to answer your questions.