



April 15, 2015

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

On behalf of the National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) and the National Apartment Association (NAA), we are writing to urge your subcommittee to fully fund the U.S. Census Bureau's request of \$257 million for the American Community Survey (ACS).

For more than 20 years, NMHC and NAA have partnered in a joint legislative program to provide a single voice for America's apartment industry. Our combined memberships are engaged in all aspects of the apartment industry, including ownership, development, management, and finance. NMHC represents the principal officers of the apartment industry's largest and most prominent firms. As a federation of more than 170 state and local affiliates, NAA is comprised of over 67,000 members representing more than 7.6 million apartment homes throughout the United States and Canada. The combined spending by the apartment industry and its 36 million residents contributed \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy and supported 12.3 million jobs in 2013.

The ACS is the only source of annually updated, detailed demographic, social and economic data for every community in the nation. ACS data determines funding levels for federal programs implemented in partnership with the apartment industry, including the Housing Choice Voucher program. NMHC/NAA use ACS data to assess apartment industry market conditions and estimate the industry's economic impact. It would be impossible for the real estate industry to obtain the data provided by this survey privately, as the Census Bureau is able to guarantee confidentiality to individuals while simultaneously producing detailed data that private entities cannot. Furthermore, any amendments that make response to the ACS questions voluntary would threaten the quality of ACS data by reducing the survey's sample size or requiring additional costs to retain the sample size. The Census Bureau estimates that a voluntary ACS would decrease response rates by 20 percent and increase costs by 30 percent. Fully funding a mandatory ACS provides policymakers and the industry with data that accurately reflects current housing market conditions.

NMHC/NAA urge your subcommittee to support a fully funded and mandatory ACS.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Bibby  
President  
National Multifamily Housing Council

Douglas S. Culkin, CAE  
President  
National Apartment Association

cc: Senator Thad Cochran, Chairman Appropriations Committee  
Senator Barbara Mikulski, Ranking Member Appropriations Committee

NMHC/NAA Joint Legislative Program