

April 4, 2006

Dear Senator or Representative:

As advocates for family well-being, we are alarmed that the President's FY2007 budget calls for the elimination of the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Elimination of the SIPP would make it more difficult for researchers to assess the economic and social situation of the country's families and the impact of state and national policies. The lack of accurate information will inevitably have negative consequences for low-income families and children.

Many experts believe that the SIPP is the nation's best source of data about poverty and income. For example, the National Academy of Sciences states, "SIPP should become the nation's primary source of income statistics... [Other national surveys] can never be designed to provide the same extent of detail or achieve the same quality of reporting as in SIPP."

The SIPP provides essential information on the extent to which programs -- such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Social Security, and unemployment insurance -- meet families' basic needs and promote upward mobility. The SIPP also tracks health insurance coverage, and provides more in-depth information than any other government survey on work/family issues, such as maternity leave. Since the SIPP is a longitudinal survey that tracks the same families over time, the SIPP's data are richer and more detailed than other surveys. In addition, the SIPP compares well in terms of accuracy to other surveys. If we lose the SIPP for even one year, then the continuity of data that makes the SIPP unique will be lost.

For good policy, we need good data. The Census Bureau has proposed creating a new survey to replace the SIPP in 2008. This will inevitably result in a loss of data, as experience shows it takes about seven years to develop broad national surveys. As workers, parents and families, we cannot afford to wait years to learn how today's policies are working.

As you consider legislation and appropriations this year, we, the undersigned organizations, urge you to ensure that Congress continues to fully fund the SIPP.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

9to5, National Association of Working Women  
ActionAid International USA  
Alliance for Children and Families  
Alternatives to Marriage Project  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association of University Women  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
American Psychological Association  
American Sociological Association  
Arab American Institute Foundation  
Center for Community Change  
Center for Economic and Policy Research  
Center for Housing Policy  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition for Health Services Research  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Consumer Federation of America

Corporation for Enterprise Development  
Families USA  
Food Research and Action Center  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Institute for America's Future  
Legal Aid Society  
Legal Momentum  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Missionary Oblates  
Mothers & More  
The Mothers Movement Online  
National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Council on Aging  
National Health Law Program  
National Housing Conference  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Welfare Engine  
National WIC Association

National Women's Law Center  
NCA Union Retirees  
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Washington Office  
RESULTS  
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.  
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Church of Christ Network for Environmental &  
Economic Responsibility  
United for a Fair Economy  
USAction  
Welfare Law Center  
Wider Opportunities for Women  
YWCA USA

ALABAMA  
VOICES for Alabama's Children

ARIZONA  
Children's Action Alliance

CALIFORNIA  
Asset Building Strategies  
Because People Matter paper  
California Partnership  
California Reinvestment Coalition  
Center on Social Disparities in Health  
DeLaroche & Company, Inc.  
Economic Development Corporation  
Greenlining Institute  
Latino Health Access  
Marc August International  
San Francisco Gray Panthers  
Service Employees International Union Local 535  
UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education  
Western Center on Law and Poverty

COLORADO  
Caroline Carey, Consultant  
The Piton Foundation

CONNECTICUT  
Connecticut Call to Action  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
Greater Hartford Legal Aid

FLORIDA  
Little Gables Neighborhood Association

IOWA  
Every Child Counts  
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Iowa Coalition for Housing & the Homeless

ILLINOIS  
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights

INDIANA  
Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues, Inc.

KANSAS  
Kansas National Organization for Women

MASSACHUSETTS  
Alliance to Defend Health Care

MARYLAND  
Towson Campus Greens

MAINE  
Maine Center for Economic Policy  
Maine Children's Alliance  
Maine Women's Lobby  
Pambeal Group for Peace  
Partners in Ending Hunger

MICHIGAN  
Dynasim Company  
UAW Retirees Chapter

MINNESOTA  
JOBS NOW Coalition

MISSOURI  
Center for Full Employment and Price Stability  
Washington County Community Partnership

NORTH CAROLINA  
North Carolina Budget & Tax Center

NEW JERSEY  
Association for Children of New Jersey  
Context Business Consulting  
New Jersey Citizen Action

NEW MEXICO  
Bicycle Advocacy Group  
New Mexico Voices for Children

NEVADA  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

NEW YORK  
Citizen Action of New York  
Coalition for the Homeless  
Fiscal Policy Institute  
Greater Rochester Interfaith Health Care Coalition  
Long Island Health Access Monitoring Project  
Martha Baker Consulting LLC  
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy  
Urban Justice Center

OHIO

Kunz Center for the Study of Work & Family  
Policy Matters Ohio  
The Center for Community Solutions

OKLAHOMA

Community Action Project of Tulsa County

OREGON

Oregon Human Rights Coalition

PENNSYLVANIA

Forest Hills, PA Borough Council – Chair, Planning &  
Zoning  
Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger  
Just Harvest: A Center for Action Against Hunger  
Keystone Research Center  
Pennsylvania NOW, Inc.

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

SOUTH DAKOTA

Four Bands Community Fund, Inc.

TEXAS

Center for Public Policy Priorities  
CHILDREN AT RISK  
Texas Asset Building Coalition

UTAH

Salt Lake Community Action Program  
Uintah Basin Association of Governments  
Utah Community Action Partnership Association  
Voices for Utah Children

VIRGINIA

Montgomery County Department of Social Services  
Virginia Poverty Law Center

WASHINGTON

Children's Alliance  
Washington Association of Churches

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia Citizen Action Group

cc: Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Director Charles Louis Kincannon, U.S. Census Bureau