



**HUMAN RIGHTS/FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO**

2131 Capitol Avenue  
Suite 206  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
(916) 444-6903

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May 18, 1988

The Honorable Terry Kastanis, Chair  
Law & Legislative Committee  
City Hall  
915 "I" Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2672

Dear Councilman Kastanis:

Enclosed please find the Commission's report to the Sacramento City Council, "A Report on the Community Forum of the 1990 Census", for Committee review and recommendation for adoption by the full City Council. A copy of the report was sent to each Council member last month when the report was formally released.

Summary

The report discusses the significance of the census, use of census data, specific concerns with the census questionnaire and corrective legislation to remedy census concerns. Information was gathered from a community forum in which a demographic expert, census official and staff from a congressional representative were present. Findings and recommendations are also discussed.

Background

In response to community concern about the 1990 Census, the Commission organized a forum in February to get more information on specific concerns about the 1990 Census questionnaire. Members of the community representing the clergy, handicapped, homeless, limited English speaking and service providers participated by giving oral and written testimony on their concerns.

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Letter to: Law & Legislative Committee  
May 18, 1988  
Page 2

Recommendation

The Commission recommends adoption of the report and its recommendations (pages 6-9) by the Committee and City Council.

Please note that the Commission has modified recommendation A.2., which calls for the endorsement of H.R. 3511 (Dymally). The enclosed letter explains the modified recommendation.

Commission staff will be present at the Thursday, May 26, 1988 meeting of the Law and Legislative Committee to answer questions the Committee may have.

If questions arise before that time, please contact Robbin DeShields Randolph, Executive Director, or Derrick Lim, Associate, at 444-6903.

Sincerely,



Martha Powers  
Chair

MP:dmw

Enclosure



**HUMAN RIGHTS/FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO**

2131 Capitol Avenue  
Suite 206  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
(916) 444-6903

May 18, 1988

The Honorable Terry Kastanis  
City Council  
915 "I" Street, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2672

SUBJECT: Update on 1990 Census Report and Recommendations

Dear Councilman Kastanis:

As a result of recent information obtained by Bob Faseler, Sacramento Area Council of Governments, the Commission revised one of the recommendations contained in: "A Report on the Community Forum of the 1990 Census." Specifically, recommendation A.2., endorsement of H.R. 3511 (Dymally), has become the object of some concern due to the technical difficulty of statistically adjusting any census undercount in communities the size of Sacramento.

Upon further review of this matter, the Commission recommends that any City Council endorsement of H.R. 3511 (Dymally) would be made contingent upon the addition of language to the bill setting a triggering requirement (i.e. the total undercount of ethnic minorities equaling or exceeding 1970 levels) before any statistical adjustments are made to the 1990 Census.

Rather than relying on a statistical adjustment, the Commission prefers that the Census Bureau concentrate outreach efforts on populations that have historically been undercounted.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robbin DeShields Randolph, Executive Director, or Derrick Lim, Associate, at 444-6903.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Martha Powers  
Chair

MP:dmsw

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Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

**A Report on the  
COMMUNITY FORUM OF THE  
1990 CENSUS**

**Prepared by**

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS/FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO**

**March 23, 1988**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### COMMISSIONERS

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Dean Lan, Secretary  
Len Cramer, Treasurer  
Charles W. Adams, III  
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Dawn Weatherington, Secretary

### SPECIAL THANKS

The Human Rights/Fair Housing Commission of the City and County of Sacramento wishes to thank Legal Services of Northern California and their Staff Attorney, Vivian Luna, for their contributions to this report.

The Commission wishes to acknowledge the members of the Human Rights Committee (Robert Dresser [Chair], Alicia Flores [Vice-Chair], Leonard Cramer, Martin Kennison, Dean Lan, Nkia Patterson and Bruce Pomer), which oversaw development of the community forum and this report. Derrick Lim, Associate, provided staff support to the Committee and developed the initial drafts of the report. Thanks also to Katha Megill, Legal Intern, who provided invaluable research support and Dawn Weatherington, Secretary, for her clerical support in producing this report.

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I.

INTRODUCTION

On February 18, 1988, the Human Rights/Fair Housing Commission sponsored a community forum on the 1990 Census. The forum was organized as a result of concerns with the 1990 Census questionnaire that have been brought to the attention of the Commission. The Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and disabled communities contend that proposed changes in the 1990 Census may result in an inaccurate count and distorted statistical picture, thereby having an adverse affect on these communities. Moreover, proposed changes in sampling and data compilation methodology may affect numerous other groups and the Sacramento community in general.

As a joint powers agency of the City and County of Sacramento, the Commission is concerned with issues that affect the full acceptance of all citizens in the community in all aspects of community life. Since major policy decisions and allocation of resources to ethnic minorities, handicapped and homeless are affected by the quality of census data, the Commission's report on the Community Forum and its own research of the issues surrounding the 1990 Census will address the following points:

- Proposed changes for the 1990 Census;
- Information on how census data is utilized and its impact on the Sacramento community;

- Issues and concerns that have been raised by various groups regarding the 1990 Census;
- The kind of impact proposed changes in the 1990 Census may have on various groups and Sacramento.

The Commission's report, which will include findings and recommendations, will be disseminated to elected officials and legislators, as well as the U.S. Census Bureau.

## II. FINDINGS

- A. Census data is vital demographic information that forms the foundation upon which major policy and funding decisions are made.

Although the original purpose of the decennial census was to determine the population of the nation for congressional appointments, census data, in reality, has become a necessary tool to also assess, justify and plan social service programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Women's and Infant's Care (WIC), Medicaid, Comprehensive Employment and Training (CETA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), National School Lunch Program, Low Income Housing Assistance, Legal Aid and Affirmative Action.

- B. The collapsing of Asian and Pacific Islander subgroups does not acknowledge the ethnic, cultural, generational, educational, economic and language diversity among Sacramento's various Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic groups.

The prevailing stereotype that "all Asians are alike" is reinforced when demographic data on Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic groups is lumped together. Sacramento's Asian population is increasingly becoming two different communities; one of newcomers (immigrants and refugees and the American-born). In addition to Vietnamese, Japanese and ethnic Chinese, Sacramento also has growing numbers of Lao, Hmong, Mien, Cambodians, Filipinos, Koreans, Thais and Tongans. This does not even include Asian ethnic groups such as Chinese and Japanese, who are American-born.

For Pacific Islanders, advocates gave testimony regarding the difficulty of securing funding for programs and services for Pacific Islanders because of the lack of data. This problem has been recognized by state legislation, A.B. 3366, Chapter 405, which requires state agencies and

departments to provide specific statistical tabulations of Pacific Islanders (i.e., Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan), as defined by the 1980 Census.

- C. The decennial census does not elicit adequate demographic data on the handicapped and disabled community.

Questions on the 1980 Census and the proposed 1990 Census questionnaire do not yield information on different types of handicaps/disabilities and their relationship to transportation, housing and employment needs. Testimony given by members of the handicapped community emphasized the paucity of data that is available on the needs of the handicapped. As such, the handicapped are at a disadvantage in justifying or competing for funds and services.

- D. The homeless will not be formally identified as homeless on the 1990 Census questionnaire.

The homeless will be surveyed in the 1990 Census, but there is no opportunity for them to be specifically identified as such. As a result, it will be very difficult to determine how large the

homeless population is and substantiate the need for housing and other services.

- E. The proposed questionnaire does not solicit sufficient information on the quality of low-income housing and overcrowding.

Accurate, up-to-date information on the quality of low-income housing and overcrowding is necessary for appropriate city planning. According to testimony submitted by Mary Irwin of the Community Services Planning Council, public funding of low-income housing has been severely cut. Without statistical data to document a problem or need, it is very difficult to advocate and plan for low-income housing.

- F. Reduction of the sample size for the long form census questionnaire will adversely affect the quality and quantity of demographic information collected.

The long form questionnaire is used to collect more detailed information on the population. A reduced sample size increases the possibility of skewed data when it is taken from the long form

and extrapolated to represent larger groups of people.

- G. The accuracy and timely release of census data is compromised by manual coding of responses.

Clearly, manual coding of responses takes more time and is affected by potential budget cuts and cost overruns by the Census Bureau. In addition, errors or omissions on write-in responses are compounded by errors in manual coding.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Human Rights/Fair Housing Commission recommends:

- A. That the City Council and Board of Supervisors write letters to State and Congressional representatives and the Subcommittee on Census Population encouraging the Census Bureau to fulfill its legislative mandate to conduct a decennial census, which provides an accurate count of the population of the United States. The letter should include the following recommendations:

1. That the Census Bureau:

- Use the 1980 Census race question format on the 1990 Census questionnaire thereby allowing Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic subgroups to check off their respective ethnicity, as opposed to writing in their ethnicity on the proposed 1990 Census questionnaire;
- Include questions that allow respondents with disabilities to identify their type of disability (i.e., speech, visual, hearing, physical, developmental) and their service needs;
- Formally identify the homeless in the 1990 Census questionnaire;
- Provide long form questionnaires to 1 in 6 individuals, as opposed to the proposed 1 in 10 individuals.

- Conduct an educational campaign on the 1990 Census questionnaire that will help and encourage the illiterate and non-English speaking to fully participate in the 1990 Census.
  
- Continue to network with governmental and community agencies to ensure that those groups such as the poor, homeless and ethnic minorities, which have been historically undercounted, are included in the 1990 Census.

2. Endorsement of H.R. 3511 (Dymally), which would correct undercounting, and H.R. 3828 (Matsui), which provides for detailed tabulations on Asians and Pacific Islanders.

3. Endorsement of Assembly Joint Resolution No. 69 (Floyd), which supports H.R. 3828 (Matsui), and Assembly Joint Resolution No. 74 (Chacon), which supports H.R. 3511 (Dymally).

B. That concerned residents and community groups also write letters to State and Congressional representatives, the Subcommittee on Census and

Population and the U.S. Census Bureau expressing the above concerns.

#### IV. REPORT

##### A. PURPOSE OF THE DECENNIAL CENSUS

The taking of a decennial census is mandated by the United States Constitution: "Representatives...shall be apportioned among the several States...according to their respective numbers...The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct." (Article I., Section 2, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.)<sup>1</sup>

The mandatory intent is that the numbers should reflect the actual number of people in the United States since the "enumeration of the inhabitants<sup>2</sup>...(is) for the purpose of allocating Congressional seats among the states."

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<sup>1</sup>Article I originally had a special provision for the counting of slaves ("...three-fifths of all other persons"). This was eliminated after the Civil War by Section 2 of the 16th Amendment. Taxes were also initially tied to census figures, in the hope that each state's fear of higher taxes would negate the inclination to achieve stronger representation by fudging on population figures. This provision was eliminated by passage of the 16th Amendment.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that the term "inhabitant" is not further defined as United States citizen or lawful permanent resident to provide a basis for the exclusion of undocumented aliens from the census count. Also see C.R.S. Report, The 1990 Decennial Census and the Counting of Illegal Aliens, Library of Congress, January 13, 1988.

It should be noted, however, that the actual method for conducting the census is not specified in the Constitution.

In 1790, the Census Act was promulgated. 13 United States Code, Section 1 et seq., Act of March 1, 1790, I Stat.101. The first census took place that same year.<sup>3</sup>

Under the Census Act, the Secretary of Commerce has been delegated the responsibility to conduct the census and to determine the number of persons in each state for the purpose of the reapportionment of the House of Representatives. Besides the reapportionment and redistricting of the House of Representatives, the census is used for the reapportionment and redistricting of state legislative and local governmental bodies.<sup>4</sup>

The courts have stated that the only constitutional purpose of the census is to determine redistricting and apportionment of representatives.<sup>5</sup> However, in reality, census data is used for various congressionally mandated purposes. This data can determine which jurisdictions are subject to an affirmative duty to comply with bilingual voting assistance requirements. 42 United States Code, Sections 1973aa-1a(b). It

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<sup>3</sup>See 2 U.S.C. § 2a relating to the reapportionment of U.S. Representatives based on the decennial census.

<sup>4</sup>See C.R.S. Report, The 1990 Decennial Census and the Counting of Illegal Aliens, Library of Congress, January 13, 1988, CRS-2.

<sup>5</sup>Carey v. Klutznick, F. 2d. 732 at page 736.

is used in setting military recruitment goals.<sup>6</sup> It was used to determine national origin quotas under immigration and naturalization laws up until 1965.<sup>7</sup>

Well over 100 federal programs distribute funds on the basis of census data.<sup>8</sup> Over \$31 billion annually in federal grants is allocated according to the information gathered in the census.<sup>9</sup> The census is the basis for predicting the amount of funds required for programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Women's and Infant's Care (WIC), as well as Medicaid, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the National School Lunch Program and Low Income Housing Assistance. Money appropriated to the Legal Services Corporation by Congress, and distribution of those funds to local legal services programs are based on statistics derived from the census.<sup>10</sup>

Census data is used by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as evidence in employment discrimination suits

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<sup>6</sup>Testimony presented to the United States House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, February 25, 1987.

<sup>7</sup>Report prepared for Senator Edward Kennedy, Chair, Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, by Congressional Research Service 96th Congress, 1st Session, pages 7 and 51ff.

<sup>8</sup>13 Clearinghouse Review, pages 861-863, March, 1980.

<sup>9</sup>January 19, 1988 Letter to Congressional members, Mervyn M. Dymally, Chair, Subcommittee on Census and Population, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service.

<sup>10</sup>Id. at 861.

to show the number of job-qualified minority individuals in a given geographic area to prove employment discrimination.<sup>11</sup> It has been suggested that demographic data regarding the population is as important as the exact count for both government and private sector (research and business) use.<sup>12</sup> Census results are used to evaluate progress on achieving societal goals. For example, various studies recently tracked the progress achieved by minorities in economic and social equality.<sup>13</sup> Regional planners frequently utilize census data as a basis for assessing the need for roads, schools, police protection and fire fighting forces.<sup>14</sup> Businesses use census results to plan their internal operations, define and locate lucrative market areas, select sites for industry, retail stores, meet government regulation requirements and judge the effectiveness of subsidiaries.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond the above stated recognized uses, census data is the basis for assessing the needs of the citizenry--in education,

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<sup>11</sup>See Hazelwood School District v. United States, (1977) 433 United States Reports 299, 310.

<sup>12</sup>Report: Improving Census Accuracy. Prepared by the Congressional Research Service for the Subcommittee on Census and Population of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, United States House of Representatives, October 12, 1987. See also: 133 Congressional Record 8787 (1987) Remarks of Mr. Dymally; and see 133 Congressional Record 8532 (1987) Remarks of Mr. Dymally.

<sup>13</sup>Id. at p. 21.

<sup>14</sup>Id. at p. 23.

<sup>15</sup>Id. at p. 24.

health care, housing, community services, employment.<sup>16</sup> Policies are developed from these assessments. Census data provide statistics for affirmative action planning in both government and private industry -- recruitment, hiring, training and promotion of under-represented groups in the labor market. Community based organizations require census data to determine their client population both statistically and demographically for funding and service delivery purposes.

Census data is crucial to the creation, shaping and planning of public policy. It is essential in the funding and development of social programs. It is necessary to identify and assess the needs of our country's populations.

#### B. INHERENT PROBLEMS OF AN INACCURATE CENSUS

Many critical issues must be addressed before, during and after the 1990 Census has been conducted. At the core of these issues is whether in fact an accurate census will be taken.

Undoubtedly, the problem of the census undercount will continue even with the 1990 Census. In 1870, 9.5% of the Blacks, but only 1.9% of Whites, were undercounted. In 1920, 1930, and 1940, Blacks were undercounted at the rates of 15.2%, 12.5% and 12.7%, respectively, while the White undercount ranged from about

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<sup>16</sup>Hearing, Subcommittee on Census and Population of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service. 100th Congress: Census Under-count and Feasibility of Adjusting Census Figure, August 17, 1987, Statement by Antonia Hernandez, President and General Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

1%, to less than 3%.<sup>17</sup> Since 1950, there has been a consistent pattern of deviation between the actual number of inhabitants and the numbers reported in the decennial census. Blacks, Hispanics and Asians are undercounted relative to Whites, and cities are undercounted relative to other areas.<sup>18</sup> In the 1980 Census, as in 1950, 1960 and 1970, the U.S. Census Bureau found Blacks much harder to count than non-Blacks. Although the Bureau invested vast amounts of money in coverage improvement in 1980, the undercount was computed at 5.9% (Blacks 4.8%, non-Blacks 1.1%).<sup>19</sup>

It should be noted that many social factors which contribute to the undercounting problem still persist. These include poverty, lack of education or educational underachievement, as well as language barriers between respondents and census enumerators. Homelessness, fear of jeopardizing receipt of government benefits by revealing information, exposure of health and zoning code violations, and a general distrust of government all contribute to an undercount skewed towards misrepresentation of minorities.<sup>20</sup> However, because minority populations tend to be found concentrated in urban areas, the

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<sup>17</sup>Young v. Klutznick, 652 F. 2d. 617 at 637, footnote 4. (1981).

<sup>18</sup>Hearing before the Subcommittee on Census and Population, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Census Undercount and Feasibility of Adjusting Census Figures, August 17, 1987 (p.44).

<sup>19</sup>Id. at p.91.

<sup>20</sup>National Research Council, Counting the People in 1980: An Appraisal of Census Plans 17, 8 (1978) (cited in 18 Columbia Law Journal of Law and Social Problems, 381 at 382).

undercount is disproportionate since states with large cities have a higher undercount rate than those states with fewer high-density urban areas.<sup>21</sup>

Undercounting reached its highest peak in the aftermath of the 1970 Census, when an estimated ten million people were missed, most of them minorities.<sup>22</sup> The Census Bureau itself imputed, for the first time, an additional five million persons, distributing them among states, using statistical techniques.<sup>23</sup>

However, for the 1990 Census, the Census Bureau has decided not to make any statistical adjustment of undercounted groups.<sup>24</sup> In response, Congressman Mervyn Dymally has introduced H.R. 3511, the Decennial Census Improvement Act of 1987, which calls for a statistical adjustment of the decennial census to correct the expected undercounting of the poor and ethnic minorities.

In addition to this statistical adjustment, minority advisory committees were established for the 1980 Census. These committees were composed of individuals and representatives of organizations well known for their activism in seeking civil rights and equal access for minority groups. Committee members

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<sup>21</sup>Young v. Klutznick, 652 F. 2d. 617 at 626-628.

<sup>22</sup>Hearing before the Subcommittee on Census and Population, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service. Census Advisory Committee on Minority Populations for 1990 Census, February 27, 1986.

<sup>23</sup>The National Law Journal, Monday, October 13, 1980 (p.28).

<sup>24</sup>Presentation by John Reeder, Regional Director, U.S. Census Bureau, at Community Forum on 1990 Census, sponsored by HR/FHC.

included such organizations as Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). These committees were very instrumental in making recommendations to the Census Bureau regarding outreach and community relations work required to overcome some of the sociological problems endemic to conducting the census.<sup>25</sup>

Because of the advisory committees' input regarding the need for the inclusion of Asian sub-set groups, e.g., Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese on the census questionnaire, the 1980 Census showed a significant reduction in the undercount problem.<sup>26</sup> Specifically, the minority undercount estimate declined from 7.6% in 1970 to 5.3% in 1980, a 2.3% improvement.<sup>27</sup>

The role of these same advisory committees is perceived as somewhat less effective for the 1990 Census. The committees were established late and reduced in size to half of the original membership.<sup>28</sup> A lack of input from the minority advisory committees on the specific questions to be included on the questionnaire was considered a crucial loss by minority advisory

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<sup>25</sup>Hearing before the Subcommittee on Census and Population, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Census Awareness and Accountability Act of 1984, August 2, 1984 (p.10).

<sup>26</sup>Id. at p. 11.

<sup>27</sup>Id. at p. 6.

<sup>28</sup>Service for the Subcommittee on Census and Population of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, U.S. House of Representatives, October 12, 1987. See also: 133 Congressional Record 8787 (1987) Remarks of Mr. Dymally; and see 133 Congressional Record 8523 (1987) Remarks of Mr. Dymally.

committee members.<sup>29</sup> Despite the Asian/Pacific American (APA) advisory committee's recommendation that the Asian subset format of the 1980 Census questionnaire be retained, the Census Bureau is still planning to utilize a single identification category for APAs with a write-in option on the 100% short form.<sup>30</sup> Protests from the Asian/Pacific American communities in conjunction with Congressman Matsui's introduction of H.R. 3828 raise current challenges to the Bureau's proposal regarding the collapsing of the Asian subsets under one category.

Census undercounting is aggravated by the social factors previously discussed. One of those factors, fear of government, is especially true within the undocumented alien population. Identification as to one's immigration status can scare both documented and undocumented persons and discourage their participation. Further, self-identification can be inherently unreliable in that many undocumented persons can misrepresent their immigration status. There is no effective way to verify such data.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, the implementation of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act has aggravated the skepticism and fear within the undocumented community. It is noted that in

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<sup>29</sup>Id.

<sup>30</sup>Sacramento County Human Rights/Fair Housing Commission Community Forum, February 18, 1988, transcript at p. 10. See also discussion under Sections IV and V of this Report.

<sup>31</sup>Memorandum from Antonia Hernandez, President and General Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, June 15, 1987, p. 4.

1980 the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) did provide a short moratorium period on INS enforcement activities in order to cooperate with Census Bureau efforts in conducting that decennial census. However, INS has indicated that it will not be receptive to another moratorium for 1990.<sup>32</sup> It is not known at this time to what extent INS enforcement practices in 1990 will aggravate the census undercount problem in the undocumented alien population.

There is a current debate among policy makers, statisticians, demographers, administrators and researchers both within and outside the Census Bureau regarding methods to cure the undercounting problem. Congressman Mervyn M. Dymally has proposed H.R. 3511 calling for an adjustment of census data.

Proponents of an adjustment argue that it is a civil rights issue that requires alleviation of the disparities between the count of different areas as well as among various components of the population -- specifically the low-income and ethnic minority groups.

Opponents argue that statistical calculations would be substituted for an actual enumeration, thus giving too much power to statistical experts who would adjust numbers based on assumptions and not necessarily fact.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Id. at p. 5.

<sup>33</sup>Report: Improving Census Accuracy. Prepared by the Congressional Research Service for the Subcommittee on Census and Population of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, United States House of Representatives, October 12, 1987, page x.

Amidst the flurry of these debates, the Census Bureau has been well on its way to implementing its plans for the 1990 Census. The Bureau will seek to contact 106 million households in the 1990 Census and produce data for 10.5 million census blocks containing more than 250 million people.<sup>34</sup>

C. OVERVIEW OF ISSUES

As indicated in the previous discussion, the accuracy of census data is of crucial importance since this data represents the population of the United States. In order to collect census data, the U.S. Census Bureau develops a census questionnaire, which it distributes to the population of the nation on Census Day. Census Day 1990 is yet to be announced by the Census Bureau, however, it is anticipated that Census Day will be designated during April, 1990.

In the verbal and written testimony given at the community forum on the 1990 Census, several questions relating to the accuracy of the census data in terms of data collection and sampling for the 1990 Census were raised. A capsule summary of the issues is presented in a table format in Appendix B. A detailed discussion of the issues is as follows:

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<sup>34</sup>Id. at p. 1.

1. Collapse of Ethnic Groups for Asians/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics

On the original proposals for the 1990 Census questionnaire, Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics would not have the opportunity to check off their respective ethnic subgroup. Rather, ethnic subgroups of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics were to be lumped together under the headings "Asian and Pacific Islander" and "Hispanic." A blank line would be provided for a write-in response of the individual's ethnic self-identification. Current Bureau plans are that the Asian/Pacific Islander category will follow this format. The Hispanic category will now follow the 1980 census format which allows for the inclusion of specific subgroups, e.g., Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican.

Several individuals and groups gave testimony, which expressed concern and opposition to the elimination of ethnic breakouts for Asians and Pacific Islanders. (See presentation by speakers Pete Johnson, Office of Congressman Robert Matsui; Robert Faseler, Sacramento Area Council of Governments. See also oral testimony of Tony Ubalde, United Methodist Church; Mary Irwin, Community Services Planning Council; Victoria Jew, California Association for Asian/Pacific Bilingual Education; Jim Kahue, Independent Pacific Islander Advocates; Vivian Luna, Legal Services of

Northern California; Geoffrey Woo-Ming, former federal employee; Gloria Harmon, State Personnel Board.)

2. Pacific Islanders Should be Considered Separately from Asians.

Testimony by Jim Kahue and Jan Allianic advocated that Pacific Islanders (Hawaiians, Samoans, Guamanians) are and should be considered as a separate race and ethnic group from Asians. As such, Hawaiians, Samoans and Guamanians would be tabulated separately from other Asian or Pacific Islander ethnic groups.

Ms. Allianic also stated that under federal legislation, the Native American Act considers native Hawaiians as "Native Americans", yet data on native Hawaiians are not tabulated within the category of Native Americans.

3. Handicapped/Disabled

Members of the handicapped community expressed concern that there was a lack of questions in the proposed 1990 Census questionnaire to collect data on the number of individuals with particular disabilities (i.e. visual, hearing, speech, developmental, physical) and how those disabilities affect the need and degree of use of public transportation, housing

and employment services. Without this type of data, it would be difficult to assess and justify need for transportation, housing and employment services for the handicapped. (See testimony by Ramona Garcia, Sacramento County Advisory Committee for the Handicapped; Gloria Harmon, State Personnel Board. Also see comments and questions by Commissioner Martha Powers.)

4. Recording and Reporting of Data on the Homeless

Kay Knepprath and Geoffrey Woo-Ming raised the issue of whether the homeless would be counted in the 1990 Census. (See testimony by Kay Knepprath, California Homeless Coalition; Geoffrey Woo-Ming, former federal employee.)

John Reeder of the U.S. Census Bureau responded that the homeless would be surveyed, but would not be formally identified as homeless on the 1990 Census questionnaire.

5. Census Questionnaire - Housing

Mary Irwin, Community Services Planning Council, and Kay Knepprath, California Homeless Coalition, shared their concerns regarding housing questions on the 1990 Census questionnaire. Both individuals are under the impression that questions related to the quality of low-income housing

in the short form version of the 1990 Census will be deleted and transferred to the long form version, which is already threatened with a reduced sample size. Ms. Irwin and Ms. Knepprath would like to see housing related questions remain on the short form version of the census questionnaire. (See testimony by Mary Irwin and Kay Knepprath.)

6. Sampling Size: Data Gathering Methodology - Reduction in the number of households receiving the long form of the census questionnaire.

All individuals will receive the short form version of the 1990 census questionnaire. At issue is the number of individuals who will receive the long form version of the 1990 census questionnaire, which elicits more detailed demographic information from the respondent.

According to John Reeder, Regional Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, the Office of Management and Budget has proposed that the Census Bureau sample 90% of the population with the short form and 10% of the population with the long form. The Census Bureau has made a counter-proposal of sampling 83% of the population with the short form and 17% of the population with the long form (see presentation by John Reeder, U.S. Census Bureau).

The Census Bureau's proposal more closely approximates the sample size of the 1980 Census, in which 81% of the population was given the short form and 19% of the population was given the long form. Mr. Reeder reminded the audience that Congress also has input into the Census and may have the final word on the percentage of short form and long form questionnaires that are given to the nation. At the time of this report, the current proposal for the 1990 long form questionnaire is to sample 1 in 10 households, as opposed to 1 in 6 households as was done in the 1980 census.

The presentation by Robert Faseler, Research Manager, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), and testimony by Mary Irwin, Community Services Planning Council, expressed deep concern with the proposed plans for reducing the use of the long form census questionnaire. Mr. Faseler and Ms. Irwin gave examples of how data for small population groups (small sampling) could be skewed when it is extrapolated to represent a larger portion of the population.

Therefore, Mr. Faseler and Ms. Irwin contend that a reduction in the number of households surveyed through the long form increases the possibilities that demographic data on small groups or geographic areas could be distorted, or lack sufficient reliability to be of any use.

7. Data Compilation Methodology - Coding

The issue of coding is important because of several factors: write-in responses; manual versus machine coding; time delay in releasing data; and budget cuts, or cost overruns. (Mr. Reeder stated that write-in responses for Asian and Pacific Islander sub-groups on the long form will be hand-coded.) Mr. Faseler pointed out that manual coding (hand counting) occurs with fill-in questions, as opposed to check-off questions, which are machine coded (computer tabulated). As a consequence, the compilation and release of data to the public would be delayed. Referring to available data on Asian and Pacific Islander write-in responses on the 1990 Census questionnaire long form, Mr. Reeder stated that "...What is really being lost in the '90 census compared to the '80 is time."

In addition, there is the potential, as Mr. Faseler noted in his presentation, for hand coding to be affected when the Census Bureau experiences budget cuts or cost overruns. "In 1980, there were cost overruns in the Bureau (Census) for the 1980 Census and one of the things that was cut back was the amount of manual coding (hand coding) that we have done on fill-in questions."

D. CORRECTIVE LEGISLATION

As of this writing, Congressman Dymally and Congressman Matsui have introduced legislation which address major issues of the decennial census. Congressman Dymally's bill, H.R. 3511, The Decennial Census Improvement Act, addresses the issue of undercounting and overcounting in the census. Dymally contends that Blacks, Hispanics, other minorities and the poor are undercounted disproportionately. As a result of under-counting, these groups in particular are adversely affected by decisions involving census data. Although Dymally's bill does not specify the adjustment method to be used, Dymally himself notes the extensive research conducted by the Census Bureau regarding ways to statistically adjust the census figures.

In his October 30, 1987, written response to Dymally's inquiry regarding adjustments to the 1990 Census, Gerald McKiernan of the Commerce Department stated that the Department has no plans for making statistical adjustments to the 1990 Census.

H.R. 3511 has bipartisan support and over 60 co-sponsors. Currently, H.R. 3511 is being considered in the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, which the Subcommittee on Census and Population is a part of. Congressman Dymally's bill is also being supported locally by California Assembly Member Peter Chacon, who has introduced Assembly Joint Resolution No. 74.

Congressman Matsui's bill, H.R. 3828, requires a breakdown of nine ethnic groups for Asians and Pacific Islanders

on the census questionnaire. This bill would require an accurate, up-to-date census count for each of the Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic groups. It would ensure that these communities would receive their fair share of federal assistance programs which are ethnic specific. Similarly, state and local governments rely on ethnic specific data for certain programs. Congressman Matsui believes that subgroup data is critical for outreach efforts and social service delivery to these affected groups.

H.R. 3828 has bipartisan support and several co-sponsors, including Congressman Dymally, who Chairs the Subcommittee on Census and Population. Congressman Matsui has received the support of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus for his bill. H.R. 3828 is currently in the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, which oversees the Subcommittee on Census and Population. In addition, Assembly Member Richard Floyd, has introduced Assembly Joint Resolution No. 69 in support of Congressman Matsui's bill.

V. APPENDICES

- A. List of Presenters (attached)
- B. Issues Concerning the 1990 Census Questionnaire
- C. Transcripts of Speaker Presentations and Oral Testimony
- D. Submitted Presentation and Testimony

NOTE: Appendices B, C and D are available upon request at the Human Rights/Fair Housing Commission. There will be a charge to cover the costs of printing. Governmental agencies will be exempt from this charge.

LIST OF PRESENTERS

The following individuals, organizations and agencies presented or submitted testimony:

- John Reeder, U.S. Census Bureau
- Pete Johnson, Office of Congressman Robert Matsui
- Robert Faseler, Sacramento Area Council of Governments
- Tony Ubalde, United Methodist Church
- Mary Irwin, Community Services Planning Council
- Ramona Garcia, Sacramento County Advisory Committee for the Handicapped
- Victoria Jew, California Association for Asian-Pacific Bilingual Education
- Jim Kanue, Pacific Islander Advocates
- Jan Allianic, Pacific Islander Advocates
- Kay Knepprath, California Homeless Coalition
- Vivian Luna, Legal Services of Northern California
- Geoffrey Woo-Ming, Physician, Former Federal Employee
- Marion Lozano, Sacramento Chapter, Mexican American Political Association
- Nancy Austin, California State Census Data Center
- Dennis Sidnor, Black American Political Association
- Gloria Harmon, State Personnel Board