



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS HEARING

House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives U. S. House of Representatives

Testimony Submitted by:

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July 5, 2007

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Formal Testimony

Chairman Clay, Mr. Turner, distinguished Members of this Committee, our host Mr. Gonzales and fellow panelists; I am honored to participate in this hearing “to discuss the significance of community partnerships to ensuring an accurate count; the importance of culturally appropriate outreach; challenges to reaching and counting members of racial, ethnic, and language minority groups and residents of rural communities; the implications of the current immigration debate for response rates to the 2010 Census; and the Bureau’s efforts to ensure a diverse workforce, from senior managerial positions to enumerators, for the 2010 Census.”

To begin, I would like to make it clear that I am here to neither discuss the merits of the Partnership Program, successes of Census 2000 nor the necessity of engaging community-based organizations, nor how critical their participation is to reducing the differential undercount and to the overall success of the count. I believe that each of these facts is evident and past successes speak for themselves.

My contribution to this hearing will be in the form of observations and recommendations. My perspective is quite unique, considering the positions I held in Census 2000 as Special Assistant to the Associate Director for Field Operations and to the Director. The Partnership Program and everything related to it, was my primary responsibility. I was involved in every decision relating to the Program such as: serving as Acting Chief of the Program, selected the Partnership Chief and Deputy, helped shape the Program vision and success measurements, responsible for budget

management, oversaw regional implementation, staffing/hiring, training, Field Directorate liaison for paid advertising, marketing, special events & oversight, developed and oversaw special initiatives & in-kind and all other elements required for success.

Despite the operational discussions surrounding Census 2000, Congress provided a robust budget and a clear mandate to develop and implement “innovative and aggressive” strategies to achieve a complete and accurate count, reduce the differential undercount and raise the mail response rate. Much of the criticisms of some of the program-initiatives were more a function of the timing of funding than about management.

Factors such as apathy, fear, distrust of government, privacy, confidentiality and feelings of insignificance are some of the impediments that exist within historically hard-to-enumerate communities. These communities and their issues are best addressed by trusted individuals, institutions and organizations. Consequently, the significance and positive impact of partner and stakeholder networks to a community mobilization effort is critical to a region’s success and to the overall success of the Census.

National programs and initiatives were translated into very effective customized grassroots campaigns by community-based, faith-based and civic organizations, educational institutions, the private sector and state and local governments. The Partnership Program was the conduit for those efforts by implementing an organized Program vision and strategy through well-connected, indigenous staff, providing technical support and customized outreach products for partners.

The effectiveness of the Partnership Program was the result of an integrated strategy that utilized innovative and aggressive elements to inspire, direct, support and celebrate community mobilization.

So, census participation is critically important to every community and not just those considered “hard-to-enumerate”.

Assumptions

✓ Plans, programs and strategies are only as good as the assumptions upon which they are based. **Inaccurate assumptions regarding 2010 Census community partnerships and the communities they serve, include:**

- **Assumption:** People/communities that want to be counted will be counted – no special program is needed to engage them.
 - **Assumption:** Communications contract will solve all partnership-related issues. With such a comprehensive contract the Partnership Program is less important.
 - **Assumption:** Partners and stakeholders are willing to respond whenever the Bureau calls.
 - **Assumption:** Partnership engagement is the least complicated of all decennial operations and therefore requires less attention and fewer resources.
 - **Assumption:** Regardless of when the Partnership Program begins, partners and partnership specialists will make it successful.
 - **Assumption:** Bureau’s credibility with key partners and stakeholders is equal to Census 2000.
 - **Assumption:** Replicating the success of Census 2000 will be just as easy in 2010.
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Observations

- ✓ Sept. 11th, immigration and other environmental challenges have increased the level of apathy, fear, distrust of government, and concern for privacy and confidentiality and will negatively impact civic engagement.
- ✓ Credibility issues exist for the Bureau with partners and stakeholders most needed to make the 2010 Census successful.
 - Many African American/Black population organizations and leaders site lack of representation in senior management positions as an indication that issues and concerns important to them are NOT as important to the Bureau.
 - Minimal integration of partner recommendations in decennial outreach planning. For example:
 - GAO evaluations and meetings with partners, following Census 2000, consistently revealed a need for partnership engagement to begin earlier to be more effective.
 - Complete Count Committee Focus Group meetings submitted meaningful recommendations but no action has been taken.
 - Many REAC recommendations regarding 2010 Census planning and implementation remain “on paper”.

The issues, challenges and obstacles capable of obstructing a complete and accurate enumeration in the 2010 Census are more complex, more intense, more pervasive and more common throughout the Country than in any other decennial.

Local problems require local solutions – guided by a strong, well-funded, “innovative and aggressive” Partnership Program.

The following recommendations provide the basis for such a Program and such solutions and focus upon ONE KEY QUESTION: DOES THE CENSUS BUREAU AND THIS CONGRESS WANT TO COUNT THE HARD TO COUNT?

Recommendations

1. Provide immediate funding for Partnership Program: *Regions must hire Partnership Program management staff this Summer to prepare 2010 regional implementation plans and develop infrastructure.*

Issues:

- ✓ Regions need staff support to develop Partnership Program implementation plans and develop management plan for recruiting, hiring and training of '08 staff.
- ✓ Regional Partnership management staff hired this Summer would ensure more efficient use of '08 funding. Summer hiring (min. 5 regional & HQ FTEs) would position managers to readily identify program and community needs and address any administrative requirements to hire indigenously. Delay in hiring this management team could result in a min. 6 month lag time in overall program development and implementation; less efficient utilization of funding, less cost effective hiring and training processes.
- ✓ Local partners and stakeholder organizations should be involved in regional plan development and engaged for their support of critical operations – e.g. recruiting/hiring, identify donated space, etc.
- ✓ Immediate need to identify indigenous staff to begin work within hardest-to-enumerate areas – e.g. Colonias, Afro-Caribbean, Arab and other rural and isolated immigrant communities, etc.

2. Ensure Partnership Program is fully funded in 2008: *Partnership Program is critical element of 2010 integrated communications strategy and infrastructure must be in place for campaign success.*

Issues:

- ✓ Communications contract and the overall integrated strategy will fail without an effective local implementation plan conducted by the regional Partnership Program and the partners they engage.
- ✓ Concern that Partnership Program will not be funded in '08 undermines confidence and morale of partners and Bureau staff.
- ✓ Delayed funding Partnership Program would most assuredly set the civic engagement campaign up for failure.
- ✓ Partners and stakeholders depend upon technical support and guidance from Partnership Program and partnership specialist to be effective.
- ✓ Delayed or inadequate funding for community partnership efforts burden partners and stakeholders with "unfunded mandate".

3. Outsource elements of Partnership Program: *Partnership Program would benefit from the support, flexibility and expertise of an outside contractor.*

Issues:

- ✓ Current status of Program funding and implementation would benefit from outside contractor flexibility and support. Capacity to provide rapid, on-demand support to Partnership Program staff and partners is important to compensate for implementation delays.
- ✓ Outsourcing to a firm with strong decennial experience and networks enables regional and headquarters staff to concentrate more on administrative and management requirements while a contractor focuses on implementation issues. Outsourcing would provide increased external accountability and monitoring.
- ✓ More cost and time efficient use of capital and human resources. Contractor networks and expertise would be added value to the Bureau, partners and stakeholders.
- ✓ Outsourcing recommendation is consistent with decisions made for other critical decennial operations – e.g. FDCA, DRIS, Communications, etc.

4. Provide '09 funding for Special Initiatives & Partner Resource Support Program: *Special Initiatives and partner resource support efforts are needed to expand engagement and enumeration in selected "hardest-to-enumerate" communities/populations.*

Issues:

- ✓ Need for more timely availability of partner resource support. Census 2000 in-kind funds were available 90 days prior to Census Day. Timing of funding did not allow partners ample time to submit applications and organize Census Day activities and limited effectiveness.
- ✓ Need to provide resources to support a range of innovative and aggressive activities by partner and stakeholder organizations.
- ✓ In 2000, resource support was limited to \$2,499. 2010 resource support should be increased to \$4,999 to accommodate need. Current local challenges require more innovative solutions implemented by partners over longer periods - at more realistic resource limits.
- ✓ Need to engage more non-traditional organizations – e.g. immigrant-based service providers and vendors in resource support.
- ✓ Need to provide more innovative approaches to target select "hardest-to-enumerate" communities – e.g. immigrant, rural, Colonias, Afro-Caribbean and Arab, etc.

5. Redefine success measurements for 2010 Census Partnership Program: *Congress and GAO should collaborate with the Census Bureau to develop Program success factors that more accurately reflects value of partners to operations and overall enumeration.*

Issues:

- ✓ Need to modify success measurements that better reflect impact and effectiveness via defined milestones for Partnership Program and partner efforts for 2010.
- ✓ Census 2000 Partnership Program evaluation was based more upon the number of partnership agreements signed and less upon the quality of the work performed.
- ✓ Redefined success measurements would enable Partnership managers and Specialists to better manage workload and track partnership effectiveness during implementation rather than after the process. Providing more quantifiable milestones, deliverables and expectations enables managers, staff and partners to better monitor resources and performance in real-time – increasing accountability.

6. Increase diversity of senior management staff: *African Americans must be better represented in senior management at Headquarters – either via hiring or contracting; hiring at regional decennial staff/enumerators level must continue to be indigenous.*

Issues:

- ✓ Perceptions of many African American leaders and organizations that the Bureau is not as committed to the issues and concerns within the African American/Black community as to other race and ethnic groups.
- ✓ African American/Black issues and concerns do not receive the level of thought and attention necessary to ensure complete and accurate enumeration in their communities because of lack of African Americans in senior decision making positions at Bureau headquarters.
- ✓ Census Bureau must not alienate any partner – for any reason and should take corrective actions to address those concerns.
- ✓ Expectation that the Bureau will continue its commitment to recruiting and hiring diverse and indigenous workforce. Success at the regional level is commendable; headquarters, at this time, is not.

Conclusion

All partners and stakeholders depend upon the Bureau and this Congress for honesty. Partners and stakeholders representing our hard-to-enumerate communities need the Bureau and this Congress to remember them, their contributions and their impact.

The Bureau's success as the premier statistical agency in the world is tied to its ability to count every person – no exceptions. Decennial enumeration and operations are difficult. Politics are complicated. Accountability and civic responsibility are not.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Appendix

L. Diane Bennett - President/CEO

Career Experience

- ✓ 30 years experience - communications services, partnership development
- ✓ 30 years management experience - government & private industry
- ✓ 30 years experience – grassroots mobilization - faith & community-based campaigns

Professional Career

- ✓ President/CEO – LD Bennett and Associates/*KinetaCorp* – 2002- present
- ✓ Vice-President–Business Development & Special Projects–Sykes Communications, Inc. (2001-2002)
- ✓ 2000 Recipient – U. S. Dept. of Commerce - Bronze Medal for Superior Federal Service
- ✓ Special Assistant to Director and Associate Director for Field Operations (GS-15) – Census 2000 – U. S. Bureau of Census (1998-2001)

- ✓ U. S. Bureau of Census – 2000 Census – (1996 – 1998)
 - Regional Coordinator – Partnership Program (GS-14) – Charlotte Region (5 States)
 - 1998 Dress Rehearsal Partnership Coordinator
- ✓ Diversity Director – Habitat for Humanity International – (1991-1996)

Career Accomplishments

- ✓ Program Director – Field Training and Career Development - Survey Enhancement; Training Enhancement and New Approaches to Enhancing Participation projects
- ✓ Program Director – design & launch of highly successful NC DOT – Title VI Compliance Tool – web-based compliance, training, data collection and assessment instrument
- ✓ Managed Census 2000 – Partnership & Marketing Campaign
- ✓ Responsible for tracking & management of Partnership budget (\$150M)
- ✓ Designed and oversaw budget tracking & reporting system for regional programs, In-Kind and Special Initiatives
- ✓ Responsible for staff of 700 decentralized field specialists: 12 regions; 520 local census field offices
- ✓ Oversaw management of \$14 million in-kind (grant) program for 140,000 Census partners; co-authored design & implementation plan
- ✓ Primary liaison for Director of Census Bureau and Congressional Black Caucus & national African American organizations
- ✓ Primary liaison for Associate Director for Field Operations and government oversight agencies – e.g. GAO, Inspector General, Census Monitoring Board
- ✓ Primary liaison for Field Directorate on Advertising Committee
- ✓ Co-author/primary liaison – Critical Buy Program – Census 2000 – Advertising Campaign
- ✓ Responsible for Field Division participation in Census 2000 – Road Tour – 12 regions
- ✓ Co-author – In-language Video text; assisted in video post production w/vendor (5 languages)
- ✓ Created Partnership Corporate Report Vol. I & II – documented Census 2000 partner efforts and program accomplishments
- ✓ Managed Habitat for Humanity International – Diversity Program – responsible for partner engagement (15 national organizations); fund raising (\$3 mil); house building (200); West African house build – 40 homes

Education

- ✓ M.R.P. – Masters Regional Planning – University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (1980)
- ✓ B.A. – Triple Major – English, Psychology, Afro-American African Studies – University of North Carolina – Charlotte (1978)
- ✓ Educational Consortium Tour – Five West African Universities – Summer 1976
- ✓ Certificate of Completion – U. S. SBA – Cost and Pricing Seminar, 2005

Affiliations

- ✓ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Life Member
- ✓ Sherman Memorial COGIC – Life Member
- ✓ Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. – Member-at-Large
- ✓ NAACP – Member

- ✓ GAL Volunteer – Juvenile Court Officer – Guardian Ad Litem Volunteer

AGENCY BACKGROUND

LD Bennett and Associates/KinetaCorp (LDBA/KinetaCorp) is a diverse full-service agency offering a broad range of comprehensive management consulting, logistics, information technology and communications services to clients targeting niche and underserved markets.

LDBA/KinetaCorp is certified SBA: 8(a), SDB, WOB; certified U.S. & NC DOT: DBE; Certified: MWBE, SBE and registered U.S. DOD: CCR & OCRA firm; Certified: State of South Carolina – MOB & State of Tennessee – WOB. Our team is also comprised of Pines One Publications, Rock Creek Productions and Saraphim Corp. Headquarters – Charlotte, NC; other locations: Reston, VA, Alexandria, VA, Houston, TX and Los Angeles, CA. We are federally certified in all 12 Bureau of Census regions and Puerto Rico.

Our agency founder and key personnel have designed and managed highly successful national, regional, state and local campaigns, projects and initiatives. *LDBA/KinetaCorp* is comprised of a cadre of diverse professionals with significant and outstanding experience in federal service and private industry. Several are retired and former Bureau of Census senior Executives with extensive networks and expertise which make our firm uniquely qualified and prepared to be an asset to this project and other 2010 Census efforts and requirements.

Collectively, we have over 140 years of Census experience, working a combined 16 decennials and 10 Dress Rehearsals. The quality of these individuals' past performance to the Bureau of Census and Federal Service is demonstrated by three Gold Medals, two Hammer Awards, three Silver Medals and four Bronze Medals.

We are extremely proud of our individual and collective work with such clients as the U.S. Bureau of Census – Census 2000 – Partnership & Marketing National Campaign, U. S. Census Bureau – Field Directorate, Regional Offices, Field Training and Development and Partnership &

Data Services Division, U.S. E.P.A., NC Office of the State Treasurer, NC Department of Transportation, NC Public Transportation Association, NC Office of Civil Rights and Business Development, Duke University, City of Charlotte and Habitat for Humanity International, to name a few.

Please visit our website to learn more about us: www.kinetacorp.com.