

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 14, 2012

Mr. Thomas L. Mesenbourg, Jr.  
Acting Director  
Bureau of the Census  
4600 Silver Hill Road  
Suitland, MD 20746

Dear Mr. Mesenbourg:

We write to respectfully request that the Bureau of the Census comply with its statutory obligation to include the U.S. territories of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in its "Census of Governments" published every five years and related annual surveys. This obligation is codified in sections 161, 182, and 191 of title 13 of the United States Code. The Bureau did conduct and report this Census for certain territories on at least six prior occasions – namely in 1903, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, and 1982.

We understand from the Bureau that "low response and lack of cooperation" from the territorial governments may have been an historical basis for excluding the territories from the Census after 1982. While the Bureau may have encountered challenges in conducting this work in the past, we do not believe that these challenges relieve the Bureau of its obligation to take, compile, and publish the best available data for each territory, and that a good faith attempt must be made with or without ideal cooperation from any one of the several territorial governments in a given census cycle. This information would be useful not only on a standalone basis, but would also allow for the inclusion of the territories in many of the comparative reports published by the Bureau. As you are likely aware, the territories face unique and significant economic challenges, and efforts to address our communities' needs are often stymied by a lack of objective and reliable data.

In light of the foregoing, we look forward to the Bureau promptly reinstating the territories in its Census of Governments and related surveys. We would appreciate your notification in the event that the Bureau encounters any lack of cooperation from any territorial government, so that we might help to overcome any perceived or actual challenges in the collection and publication of this important data in accordance with your standards and processes.

Sincerely,



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Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
Member of Congress



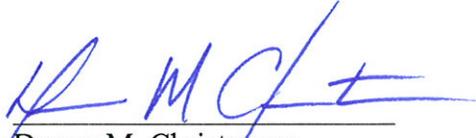
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Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Member of Congress

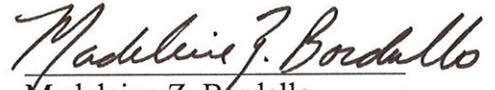
Mr. Thomas L. Mesenbourg, Jr.

December 14, 2012

Page 2



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