

**Information Items for AEA Committees on  
Economic Statistics and Government Relations  
October 7, 2020**

**1. On the Federal Budget for FY 2021 (which began October 1, 2020)**

- a. Congress passed and the President signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) that, in the absence of a legislated FY 21 budget, extends the operation of the government at 2020 funding levels through December 11, 2020.
- b. the CR includes anomalous funding for several large ongoing agency projects, including making more than \$1.5 billion available to the Census Bureau and the Decennial Census program.
- c. The lame-duck Congress will resume budget negotiations after the election, but only the House has so far passed a FY 21 budget. The House Appropriations Bill, which can be seen [HERE](#), would provide 1.3 trillion in funding for Defense, Commerce-Justice-Science, Energy and Water Development, Financial Services and General Government, Labor-HHS-Education, and Transportation-Housing and Urban Development appropriations. It would raise the proportion of appropriations dedicated to non-defense discretionary programs.
- d. The Senate has not yet acted on appropriations.
- e. The President's FY 21 budget proposal, which represents the Administration's perspectives and priorities on funding was issued earlier this year:  
[https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/budget\\_fy21.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/budget_fy21.pdf)
- f. Implications thus far for major economic statistics and science agencies include increases in BEA funding, relative stability in the BLS budget relative to FY20, decreases in Census funding consistent with the stage of the 2020 Census, and a year-over-year decrease in the NSF budget (although NSF was just appropriated an extra \$ 3Billion for COVID-19 related research).

**2. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) seeks new members for its Technical Advisory Committee,** which advises BLS on technical aspects of data collection and measurement and recommends research needs. Nominations are due by Oct. 19.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/18/2020-20604/technical-advisory-committee-request-for-nominations>

**3. Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building.** The Committee, authorized by the Foundations for Evidence Based Policymaking Act of 2018, is now operational <https://www.bea.gov/evidence>. Members have been named and its first meeting will be held virtually on October 23, 2020. The meeting can be viewed by the public. Email [Gianna.Marrone@bea.gov](mailto:Gianna.Marrone@bea.gov) by October 16 to RSVP and receive logistical information to join.

**4. The National Science Foundation has issued a request for information on STEM Education:** <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/04/2020-19681/notice-of-request-for-information-on-stem-education> Comments due Oct. 19

**5. New Data Linkages from the National Center for Health Statistics with Medicare Data provide research opportunities:** Data collected from the [National Hospital Care Survey \(NHCS\)](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data-linkage/NHCS) are augmented with administrative data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Medicare program. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data-linkage/CMS-Medicare-Restricted.htm>. An Oct. 20 Webinar introduces analytical opportunities; to register: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data-linkage/datalinkage-webinar.htm>

## **6. Timing of the 2020 Census**

- a. AEA Committees have issued a statement about the importance of accurate and reliable data from the 2020 Census (<https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=12542>) and have sent letters to legislators endorsing an extension of the 2020 Census count (<https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=12799> and <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=13207>)
- b. The following history of recent administrative, legislative, and judicial actions demonstrate ongoing tension with potential effects on 2020 Census accuracy:
  - i. **April 13, 2020**, in a joint statement, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Census Director Steven Dillingham announced that, "In order to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau is seeking statutory relief from Congress of 120 additional calendar days to deliver final apportionment counts." Under this plan, the Census Bureau would extend the window for field data collection and self-response to October 31, 2020, allowing for apportionment counts to be delivered to the President by April 30, 2021, and redistricting data to be delivered to the states no later than July 31, 2021
  - ii. **In late July, 2020**, the Department of Commerce abandoned its earlier request to Congress to push back the 2020 Census statutory reporting deadlines, directing the Census Bureau to complete remaining counting operations by September 30, 2020, and to curtail quality check and data processing activities (even though the national self-response rate at the start of the NRFU was the lowest ever, and the number of homes to visit in person the highest ever.) On July 8, 2020, Census Associate Director Al Fontenot said they were already "past the window" of being able to provide the latest census numbers to the president by Dec. 31.
  - iii. **In early August 2020**, many hundreds of stakeholding organizations urged the Senate to include language in its next COVID relief measure that would extend the 2020 Census statutory deadlines for delivering apportionment and redistricting data, or to take other actions to extend the deadlines to assure an accurate 2020 Census count. AEA Committees were among these: <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=12799>. On August 11, businesses and business leaders joined others in protest of the suspension of a 2020 Census operation deadline: [https://www.insightsassociation.org/sites/default/files/misc\\_files/biz\\_letter\\_2020\\_census\\_deadlines\\_8-11-20.pdf](https://www.insightsassociation.org/sites/default/files/misc_files/biz_letter_2020_census_deadlines_8-11-20.pdf)
  - iv. **On September 20, 2020, U.S.** federal judge, Judy Kohl ruled that that the Census Bureau must continue its count until Oct. 31, saying plans to end earlier were "erroneous ... unlawful" and undermined the credibility of the count.
  - v. **On September 15, 2020**, a bipartisan bill was introduced in the Senate to extend the Census deadlines: S.4571, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate->

[bill/4571](#). A large number of professional and stakeholding groups have already endorsed this bill (including the AEASat Committee: <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=13207>).

- vi. **On September 28, 2020** U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur directed the 2020 Census to end Oct. 5, despite the federal judge's earlier ruling.
  - vii. **The 2020 Census ending date controversy has gone to the Supreme Court to resolve.** But a number of Census 2020 operations have begun closing down in the meantime.
7. **Excellent session on Data Quality Implications of Census 2020 Census**, including presentations by Margo Anderson and Nancy Potok, is available for viewing at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGh4IJ\\_kcV8&t=19s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGh4IJ_kcV8&t=19s)
  8. **J-PAL and MIT release a new report on Using administrative Data for Research and Evidence Based Policy** <https://admindatahandbook.mit.edu/>
  9. **A Data Foundation Report outlines the need for modernizing federal data infrastructure, and proposes options for a National Secure Data Service (NSDS).** The authors favor the option of a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) as the organizational structure for the NSDS. (FFRDCs are public-private partnerships which conduct research for the federal Government.) See: <https://www.datafoundation.org/modernizing-us-data-infrastructure-2020>