



April 9, 2024

Robert L. Santos
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
4600 Silver Hill Rd.
Hillcrest Heights, MD 20746

RE: Request for DRRC Inclusion in Stakeholder Meetings for ACS Disability Questions

Dear Director Santos:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations of the Disability & Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DRRC), we write to express our sincere gratitude for the recent decision by the U.S. Census Bureau to halt the proposed changes to the American Community Survey (ACS) disability questions for collection year 2025 and reconsider additional questions for future use. This decision demonstrates a commendable commitment to listening to the concerns of the disability community and ensuring that our voices are heard in the development of policies that directly impact us.

The DRRC includes 24 national research, clinical, and consumer non-profit organizations committed to improving the science of rehabilitation, disability, and independent living. We seek to maximize the return on the federal research investment to improve the ability of Americans with disabilities to live and function as independently as possible following an injury, illness, disability, or chronic condition. As a coalition advocating for investment in and focus on disability research, we are acutely aware of the importance of accurate and comprehensive data collection.

The American Community Survey serves as a critical tool for understanding the needs and experiences of individuals with disabilities across the United States. By maintaining the integrity of the disability questions, the Census Bureau is helping to ensure that policymakers, researchers, and advocates have access to reliable data to inform decision-making and allocate resources effectively.

In light of this positive development, we request that the DRRC be included as a stakeholder in the upcoming meetings related to the American Community Survey and other initiatives that impact people with disabilities at the Census Bureau. Our organization represents a diverse range of organizations focused on improving lives for people with disabilities through research, and we are eager to contribute our insights and expertise to the conversation. By including us as

stakeholders, the Census Bureau can further strengthen its efforts to promote inclusivity and accurately capture the experiences of people with disabilities in its data collection efforts. We encourage the Census Bureau to reach out a robust cross-section of disability organizations, coalitions, and members of the disability community for inclusion in the upcoming stakeholder meetings.

Once again, thank you for your responsiveness to the concerns of the disability community and your commitment to upholding the principles of equity and inclusion in data collection. We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with the Census Bureau.

If you have any questions, or if the DRRC can provide any assistance to you and your colleagues, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Thomas and Natalie Keller, DRRC Co- Coordinators, at Peter.Thomas@PowersLaw.com and Natalie.Keller@PowersLaw.com, or call 202-349-4251.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Members of DRRC

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association on Health & Disability
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association*
American Physical Therapy Association*
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Amputee Coalition
Association of Academic Physiatrists*
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Brain Injury Association of America*
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
National Association for the Advancement Orthotics & Prosthetics
National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers*
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
Spina Bifida Association
United Spinal Association
**** DRRC Steering Committee Member***