

Opening Statement of Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay, Chairman

“Critical Budget Issues Affecting the 2010 Census – Part 2”

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

July 30, 2008

As Congress considered the FY 2008 budget nine months ago, this Subcommittee held a hearing to review the consequences of a continuing resolution (CR) on Census operations.

The issue then, just as it is today, was whether the Census Bureau had special needs that would warrant an exemption, or anomaly, in the CR to address its unique circumstances.

Last year, due to inadequate funding, the Bureau reduced the scope of its dress rehearsal and cancelled testing for other important Census operations.

Today we will examine the impact of a potential FY 09 CR on operational plans for the decennial Census.

As the Bureau ramps up to the 2010 Census, its annual budget will grow exponentially. It is critical that the Bureau have necessary funds to complete key Census operations in fiscal year 2009.

Without sufficient resources, the Bureau will be unable to open local Census offices in every Congressional district, hire personnel, and most importantly, they will not be able to conduct address canvassing.

Delaying any of these operations will be detrimental to the decennial. Cancelling address canvassing will result in an incomplete and inaccurate master address file.

The master address file is the database used to mail Census forms to every household. If we start with an inaccurate master address file, Census accuracy is doomed. We cannot afford to let this happen.

I thank all of our witnesses for appearing today and look forward to your testimony.