

# Comments on ACS Briefing

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**CSAC Meeting  
April 17, 2015**

# ACS Content Review

- CSAC was first presented information about the ACS content review at the September 2013 meeting. At that time, CSAC concerns focused on the possibility of adding a parental place of birth question. There was a request for comments from CSAC members, but that was difficult to satisfy due to lack of information about the detailed nature of the review.
- CSAC was given a more detailed briefing on the ACS content review at the April 2014 meeting. Although there was more information about the planned review, there was little detail on exactly how the review would proceed. At the April 2014 meeting, concerns were raised about the absence of any consideration of the importance of ACS items for research in the content review.

# ACS Content Review

- At the April 2014 meeting, the items targeted for possible removal were:
  - Plumbing Facilities
  - Journey to Work
  - Income
  - Disability
- The items targeted for possible removal in the content review as of Fall 2014 were:
  - Change in Marital Status
  - Undergraduate Field of Study
- There is no overlap between the two lists.

# ACS Content Review

- Several CSAC members participated in a conference call in Fall 2014 about the ACS content review and expressed concern with the arbitrary nature of the content review and the specific questions targeted for removal.
- There was a request for the scores obtained in the content review for all of the ACS items, but this information was never provided.

# CSAC Response to ACS Content Review

- As part of the official comment process on the ACS content review, CSAC submitted a letter in December 2014 with the following major points:
  - The review process was arbitrary and inadequate.
  - The value of the marital history questions has repeatedly been justified, and there is no other source for this information.
  - The undergraduate field of study question was added to the ACS in 2009 at the recommendation of the National Academy of Sciences. It has been key to studies of students in STEM fields. The question has been used in several thousand research papers.
  - There are good reasons for ACS to add a parental place of birth item.

# ACS Content Review

- It seems that it was recommended to OMB in April 2015 that all of the targeted items from Fall 2014 be removed and also an item on business or medical office on property be removed.
- There was a decision not to consider adding any items to the ACS, even if items were removed.

# Questions

- What was the process for taking comments on the ACS content review into account?
- Will OMB be asking for comments about the ACS content review, and how are they likely to respond to comments?
- Is it not allowed for importance to research to be one consideration in reviewing the usefulness of ACS items?
- In September 2013, ACS asked for comments on the planned content review, and perhaps CSAC members should have responded more extensively and more clearly. What can be done in the future by the Census Bureau and by CSAC to help ensure that CSAC advice is maximally helpful?
- Has it been decided to discontinue the ACS 3-year estimates? If so what is the rationale for this? It seems it would cost very little to produce the 3-year estimates.