

Public Law 102-135
102d Congress

An Act

To provide for a study, to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences, on how the Government can improve the decennial census of population, and on related matters.

Oct. 24, 1991
[H.R. 3280]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Decennial
Census
Improvement
Act of 1991.
13 USC 141 note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Decennial Census Improvement Act of 1991".

SEC. 2. STUDY.

13 USC 141 note.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce shall, within 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and subject to the availability of appropriations, contract with the National Academy of Sciences (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the "Academy") to study—

(1) means by which the Government could achieve the most accurate population count possible; and

(2) consistent with the goal under paragraph (1), ways for the Government to collect other demographic and housing data.

(b) SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting its study, the Academy shall consider such matters as—

(1) with respect to subsection (a)(1)—

(A) ways to improve the Government's enumeration methods, especially with regard to those involving the direct collection of data from respondents;

(B) alternative methods for collecting the data needed for a basic population count, such as any involving administrative records, information from subnational or other surveys, and cumulative or rolling data-collection techniques; and

(C) the appropriateness of using sampling methods, in combination with basic data-collection techniques or otherwise, in the acquisition or refinement of population data, including a review of the accuracy of the data for different levels of geography (such as States, places, census tracts and census blocks); and

(2) with respect to subsection (a)(2)—

(A) the degree to which a continuing need is anticipated with respect to the types of data (besides data relating to the basic population count) which were collected through the last decennial census; and

(B) with respect to data for which such a need is anticipated, whether there are more effective ways to collect information using traditional methods and whether alternative sources or methodologies exist or could be implemented for obtaining reliable information in a timely manner.

(c) REPORTS.—(1) The Academy shall submit to the Secretary and to the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service of the House of Representatives and the committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate—

(A) within 18 months after the date on which a contract is entered into under subsection (a), an interim report on its activities under this Act; and

(B) within 36 months after the date on which a contract is entered into under subsection (a), a final report which shall include a detailed statement of the Academy's findings and conclusions, as well as recommendations for any legislation or administrative action which the Academy considers appropriate.

(2) With respect to each alternative proposed or discussed in its final report, the Academy shall include—

(A) an evaluation of such alternative's relative advantages and disadvantages, as well as an analysis of its cost effectiveness; and

(B) for any alternative that does not involve the direct collection of data from individuals (about themselves or members of their household), an analysis of such alternative's potential effects on—

(i) privacy;

(ii) public confidence in the census; and

(iii) the integrity of the census.

Approved October 24, 1991.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3280:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 102-227 (Comm. on Post Office and Civil Service).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 137 (1991):

Sept. 30, considered and passed House.

Oct. 3, considered and passed Senate, amended.

Oct. 9, House concurred in Senate amendments.