

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

November 2, 2023

The Honorable Robert Santos
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, D.C. 20233

Dear Director Santos:

We write to express concern about the U.S. Census Bureau's potential use of questions about "gender identity" on the American Community Survey (ACS), the bureau's most extensive survey on American life.

On September 19, 2023, the U.S. Census Bureau asked the Biden Administration for permission to test questions about gender identity for respondents over the age of 15 on the ACS. The Census Bureau has requested \$10 million to study the best way to present such questions with the purported intent of testing out the wording, placement, and response categories to analyze the differences between "LGBTQ+ people." The Census Bureau's gender-identity test questions would ask what sex the person was assigned at birth and what they feel is their current gender.

The ACS reaches 3.5 million households each year, collecting data on topics such as age and sex, educational attainment, employment status, disability status, and internet access, among others. The ACS plays a critical role in informing officials and leaders within communities about their constituents, which is why it is troubling that the Census Bureau is attempting to politicize the survey by including highly polarizing and patently false topics, like gender identity.

Biology determines gender, not subjective belief, and the bureau should not jeopardize the legitimacy of crucial statistical information by endorsing unscientific and untrue concepts like gender identity. For generations, the American people have looked to the U.S. Census as an unbiased, authoritative source describing the objective reality of life in America. It is not worth sacrificing this trust to advance controversial social ideas through government surveys.

It's important to recognize that the notion of "gender identity" is unscientific, subjective, and political. Those who promote the concept themselves admit that gender identity is fluid and may be changed by an individual on a whim. However, common sense and basic biology tell us that gender is not a matter of subjective belief; it is rooted in objective reality. How an individual chooses to express themselves is a matter of personality, not "gender identity." Moreover, questioning minors about their "gender identity" risks misleading them that the concept is valid and backed by the U.S. government—which it emphatically is not. If the Census Bureau wants to gain information about the dramatic and troubling rise in gender dysphoria, there are ways to do

that. For example, it could ask respondents whether they suffer from gender dysphoria in addition to asking about their sex, either male or female. The Census Bureau should not lend credence or official weight to a false concept like gender identity, or it will damage its credibility as an authoritative statistical body.

Official government surveys should reflect objective reality. Gender identity is a harmful ideology being pushed by the Bureau to politicize the ACS. Further, presenting respondents with classifications regarding false gender identities rather than focusing solely on one's biological gender is not beneficial to our ability to analyze data and to subsequently use such data to further the interests of communities. Given these facts, we urge the Census Bureau to withdraw any request to include notions of or questions pertaining to gender identity on the ACS.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



JD Vance
U.S. Senator