

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement
OMB Control Number 0607 - 0466

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Necessity of the Information Collection

The U.S. Census Bureau requests authorization from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to conduct the November 2012 and 2014 Voting and Registration supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The Voting and Registration supplement continues the biennial collection of data concerning voting and registration that has been asked periodically since 1964. The data yield statistics on voter (and nonvoter) characteristics and current voter trends. The data also will enable policymakers to keep issues up to date, such as changes in participation in the election process by demographic characteristics such as age, sex, race, ethnicity, and educational attainment.

This supplement is sponsored by the U.S Census Bureau. The collection of these data is authorized under Title 13, United States Code, Section 182.

This submission includes the unchanged Voting and Registration Supplement with the deletion of the Civic Engagement Supplement. The proposed questions in the Voting and Registration supplement are shown in Attachment A.

2. Needs and Uses

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of the information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to the information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

The primary purpose of collecting the voting data from the November CPS supplement is to relate demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, education, occupation, and income) to voting and nonvoting behavior. Federal, state, and local election officials; college institutions; political party committees; research groups; and other private organizations will use the voting and registration data collected in the November CPS supplement. Election officials use these data to formulate policies relating to the voting and registration process. Data obtained on duration of residence will allow policymakers and researchers to better determine the relationships between other demographic characteristics and

voting behavior. Previous studies have shown that the voting and registration characteristics of recent movers differ greatly from those of nonmovers. By collecting and presenting data at the state level, we will also obtain information on the effectiveness of increased voter registration drives in different regions.

Discontinuance of the Voting and Registration Supplement would disrupt a data series that has been in existence for the past 46 years. Since 1964, these data have provided statistical information for tracking historical trends of voter and nonvoter characteristics in each presidential and congressional election.

3. Use of Information Technology

Since January 1994, we have collected the CPS data using computer-assisted interviewing. We designed the supplemental questions to obtain the required information with minimal respondent burden.

The proposed items and interviewer procedures were developed over years of consultation among the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and other government agencies. The use of computer-assisted personal and telephone interviewing is deemed the most appropriate collection methodology given existing available information technology. We are examining the Internet as a reporting option, but have not yet determined whether the Internet is feasible for a complex demographic survey such as the CPS.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The Voting and Registration supplement's comprehensive set of questions does not duplicate any other single information collection with respect to scope, timeliness, or population of interest. There are no comparable data that can be replicated, substituted, or modified for use as described in section A2 above.

5. Efforts to Minimize Burden on Small Business

The collection of the voting information does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

We must collect voting and registration data at the time of presidential and congressional elections, which are conducted biennially. These are the only elections that are held on the same date throughout the country. Less frequent collection would reduce the ability to track changes over time and lessen the quality of the voting data time series.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. We collect the CPS data in a manner that is consistent with the OMB guidelines.

8. Consultations Outside the Agency

The Census Bureau published a notice in the *Federal Register* on May 8, 2012, Vol. 77, No. 89, pp. 27020, inviting public comment on our plans to submit this request. We received no comments in response to that notice.

The Census Bureau was in frequent consultation with the following people concerning the development of the supplement:

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The result of these consultations is the final set of questions. Furthermore, a statement soliciting comments for improving the CPS data is prominently placed in all the Census Bureau publications that cite the CPS data. We include a similar statement in the technical documentation that accompanies the microdata files. Finally, the CPS advance letter (see Attachment C) provides respondents with an address at the Census Bureau and at the OMB to which they can submit general comments on the survey, specifically those regarding respondent burden.

9. Paying Respondents

The Census Bureau does not make any payments or provide any gifts to individuals participating in the CPS.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The Census Bureau will collect the Supplement data in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the OMB Circular A-130. Each sample household receives an advance letter approximately one week before the start of the initial CPS interview (see Attachment C). The letter includes the information required by the Privacy Act of 1974, explains the voluntary nature of the survey, and states the estimated time required for participating in the survey. Interviewers must ask if the respondent received the letter and, if not, provide a copy and allow the respondent sufficient time to read the contents. Also, interviewers provide households with the pamphlet *The U.S. Census Bureau Respects Your Privacy and Protects Your Personal Information*, which further states the confidentiality assurances associated with this data collection effort and the Census Bureau's past performance in assuring confidentiality (see Attachment B).

All information given by respondents to Census Bureau employees is held in strict confidence under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. Every Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to that effect and is subject to a jail penalty or substantial fine if they disclose any information given to them.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The November Voting and Registration Supplement does not include any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of Hour Burden

The estimated respondent burden is 1,300 hours. Due to age and citizenship requirements for the voting questions, approximately 52,000 households are actually interviewed for the supplement. With each household interview, on average, being one and a half minutes long, this amounts to an hour burden of 1,300 hours for these questions.

13. Estimate of Cost Burden

There are no costs to respondents other than that of their time to respond.

14. Cost to Federal Government

The estimated cost to the government for the CPS program is \$92 million in FY 2012. The costs are to be borne by the Census Bureau, the BLS, and other government agencies, if involved. We estimate the cost of the supplement on Voting and Registration to be \$250,000, in FY 2013 and FY 2014.

15. Reasons for Change in Burden

The increase in burden is attributable to this request being submitted as a reinstatement.

16. Project Schedule

The November CPS, of which this supplement is a part, will be conducted during the week of CPS interviewing. Processing of this supplement will commence in December 2012. The public use file will be released approximately 12 months later, with voting and registration tabulations released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

17. Request to Not Display Expiration Date

The Voting and Registration Supplement is administered as part of the CPS monthly interview. However, this supplement (as well as all the CPS supplements) bears an OMB control number and expiration date which is different from the basic CPS interview. The OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS basic interview is included in the advance letter we give respondents (see Attachment C). Because of these difficulties and anticipated respondent confusion involved with expressing a separate control number and expiration date to respondents for the supplement questions, we do not wish to display the OMB control number and expiration date for the CPS November Supplement.

18. Exceptions to the Certification

There are no exceptions to the certification.