

TRANSCRIPT

Conference Call re Federal Register Notice on Potential Revisions to Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Standards for the Collection and Reporting of Race and Ethnicity Data

Moderator

Sam Go

Featured Speakers

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Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants will be on a listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today's conference. At that time please press Star 1 on your phone to ask a question and record your name at the prompt. This call is being recorded. If you object you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the call over to Sam Go. You may begin.

Sam Go: Hello, good afternoon. My name is Sam Go and I serve as an advisor and staff member here at the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Also joining us is Doua Thor, the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Thank you all for joining us for this important conference call regarding the Office of Management and Budget's recent Federal Register notice that offers the public an opportunity to comment on how the government collects and records race and ethnicity data.

Specifically the public has the opportunity to comment on potential revisions to the OMB standards on collecting and reporting a race and ethnicity data that we issued in 1997. So the fact that it has been nearly 20 years since these standards were issued underscores the importance for the AAPI community to respond with comments to make sure that the standards represent what the community's suggestions and needs are.

We have the pleasure today of hearing from two very important people regarding the government's collecting and reporting of race and ethnicity data. Katherine Wallman serves as Chief Statistician at the United States Office of Management and Budget also known as OMB. She provides policy oversight, establishes priorities, advances long term improvements, and sets standards for our federal statistical establishment that comprises more than 80 agencies spread across every cabinet department.

Nicholas Jones is a Director of Race and Ethnic Research and Outreach for the U.S. Census Bureau. He leads the Census Bureau's ongoing efforts for racial and ethnic research and outreach in preparation for the design of the 2020 census. Katherine and Nicholas, thank you both for joining us today.

Nicholas Jones: Thank you Sam.

Katherine Wallman: Thank you.

Sam Go: Thank you. In this call Katherine will provide an overview and background of the OMB standards as well as a description of the Federal Register notice process, a process often called notice and comment. Next Nicholas will provide an overview of the Federal Register notice itself providing some background on how the notice was developed and the key proposed revisions addressed in this notice.

Katherine will then talk about some of the logistics regarding providing public comments to the notice and then both Katherine and Nicholas will offer advice and tips on how to provide public comments that are both salient and effective.

We here at the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders strongly believe that collecting and reporting data that accurately reflects the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community is critical to our mission to ensure that the federal government does all it can do to address the needs of these communities. The Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community is both the fastest growing racial group in the United States and one of the most diverse.

With that in mind, now is an incredible opportunity for the community to speak directly to the federal government through this Federal Register notice. As a reminder the operator will be collecting questions from the participants. Please press Star 1 to put your question in the queue as soon as the Q&A begins. If you have already submitted your question please press Star 1 to queue your question up and ask your question directly to the speakers.

Now to just, you know, reiterate, we are seeking just questions. Regarding any comments, the comments do need to be provided to the Federal Register so we're just seeking questions for the Q&A session.

We have over 200 participants registered for this call and ask that you make your questions brief and succinct so that we may get through as many questions as possible. If for some reason we are unable to get to your question we ask that you send it via email to race-ethnicity@omb.eop.gov. Again that's race-ethnicity@omb.eop.gov.

In addition, this call will be recorded and uploaded to our website for future reference. If you know of any community members who were not able to join today but would like additional information, OMB may be looking at options to in the future to get with community members which Katherine can clarify later on.

We are excited about the tremendous response to this Federal Register notice and hope that you will continue to stay involved throughout this process. We also plan to have a Frequently Asked Questions document that will be made publicly available soon via our website.

Again thank you all for participating in this important call. I will now turn this over to Katherine who will begin with an overview and background of the OMB standards. Katherine?

Katherine Wallman: Thanks very much Sam and hello to everyone and thank you for joining us. I hope it's as beautiful where you are today as it is here in Washington. The weather is absolutely spectacular so let's hope the call is spectacular as well.

I thought it might be useful for those especially who don't have much background working with the Office of Management and Budget to just highlight for a moment the fact that in addition to its well-known role in producing the president's budget every year the Office of Management and Budget has a few other statutory responsibilities that it fulfills.

One of the longest of these - longest standing of these is its responsibility for oversight and coordination of what we refer to often as our decentralized federal fiscal system. In that set of responsibilities there are several. The one I

want to focus on - your attention on here for a moment is the responsibility my office has for developing and issuing and then overseeing implementation of standards affecting the collection and presentation of statistics on various agencies in the federal government.

One of those standards is the one for data on race and ethnicity. There are similar kinds of standards for classifying occupations, for classifying industries, for designating metropolitan statistical areas. All of these standards are issues promulgated by our office in order that different agencies when they're collecting data are using the same kind of classification systems so that they can communicate with each other and so that we have if you will numerators and denominators that are collected along the same lines.

The second thing that I would underscore is that in addition to this being one of the suite of standards that our office issues I would emphasize that our office doesn't order that agencies should collect certain kinds of data. What it does do is indicate by the standards that if an agency for various and sundry reasons is collecting a particular kind of data whether it's data on race and ethnicity or whether it's data on occupations that then they should use the standards so the comparability can be ensured.

I'm not sure that's always well understood but the justification and rationale for collecting the information comes from the agency itself whether it's the Census Bureau or the Department of Education or the National Center for Health Statistics. They are the ones that are justifying the need for data and the level at which they need the data. We are the ones saying if you're collecting that kind of information then we need to be collecting it in accordance with the standards and definitions.

I think and the second thing that I was asked to do at the outset here is to talk about our Federal Register process. As we have done in the past for this standard and for others that we issue, we do a combination of things in developing a standard. One is to have a group of the affected agencies involved in the process. And I think in the current work we have something upwards of 30 agencies who have been actively involved in the research activities that Nicholas is going to be telling you about.

Our second aspect is the research itself. And in this case much of the research that you'll be hearing about has been carried out by our colleagues at the Census Bureau. In addition there have been some pieces of implementation and research that have gone on in other agencies of the government and they have contributed to our knowledge here.

Third and importantly is our public comment process and that's why we're here talking to you today. Whatever we do along the lines along the way to coming to consensus about a standard, we do have opportunities, usually more than one, for public comment.

What you are seeing in the Federal Register notice process at this point is that first opportunity for comment in this developmental process. And this is indeed almost - we refer to it kind of as a heads up in this first Federal Register notice to let people know the scope of what it is we're looking at in this standard and importantly to let them know that there is more information coming to them fairly soon in fact in another Federal Register notice where we will be inviting additional comments.

And then ultimately we will be issuing our decisions based on recommendations that we get from the interagency group, from the research,

and from the public comments. OMB will issue a final notice with its decisions about any changes that it may be making to the standard.

As Sam mentioned at the outset of this call, we did last do a - I'll call it a robust review of the standard in the 1990s and at that time we actually did make some very significant changes in the standard. In this instance what we're doing is looking at particular things that have come to our attention largely through the implementation of that 90s standard.

There have been a few things that we have learned from implementation by the Census Bureau but also importantly by other agencies that had been employing the standard in their data collection. And it's those kinds of learnings that we have been doing research on over the last couple of years to try and inform some perhaps modest changes in the way the standard is set forth.

So that has been the focus of our work and that's the focus of the Federal Register notice. And I think at this point then I will turn to Nicholas who is going to give you a better sense of what actually is in the notice and the kinds of things we're seeking comments about at this time.

Nicholas Jones: Thank you Katherine. That was really great. And what I'm going to do is give you a little more insight to the work that has been done both at the Census Bureau and also the work with the OMB interagency group with other federal agencies.

Over the past couple of years researchers from the Census Bureau have been working with our colleagues from other federal agencies and the U.S. Office of Management and Budget on a federal interagency working group for research on race and ethnicity.

This work is conducted under the guidance of OMB as Katherine mentioned which has the charge of maintaining the standards for the federal government's use of data on race and ethnicity and federal agencies have been exploring different options for improving the federal data on race and ethnicity.

This work has been done in collaboration and it's following a number of key objectives for examining the current OMB standards as Katherine mentioned. During the fall of last year in 2015 the Census Bureau undertook a critical mid-decade study that is helping to explore ways to improve our race and ethnicity questions and to better measure and represent our nation's myriad racial and ethnic identities.

Within the past year our research team has shared and discussed the plans for testing, different question designs, and explaining the research study and the goals and participated in numerous dialogues about the research plans with OMB, with other agencies, and also with community leaders like yourselves.

The research which we call the 2015 national content test has provide a means for looking at successful strategies to address known race and ethnicity reporting issues that we understand from previous work such as the 2010 census or the 2010 alternative questionnaire experiment research on race and Hispanic origin.

And it is also addressing a lot of racial and ethnic community feedback on improving data for our nation's growing and diversifying populations that we have heard over the last several years.

The big goal of this research is to improve the question design and the data quality for race and ethnicity while also addressing these community concerns that we have heard including a call for more detailed disaggregated data for our diverse American experiences as Japanese and Samoan or German, Mexican, Jamaican, Korean, etc. and identifying and providing data for those different identities.

Now in terms of describing the purpose of the OMB interagency working group for research on race and ethnicity and its review of the '97 standards, as Katherine mentioned since the issuance of the '97 standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity several agencies have conducted methodological research to better understand how the use of those standards informs the quality of federal statistics as we have them today.

And much has been learned about that particularly the implementation of the new revisions to the standards since they were issued approximately 20 years ago.

Accordingly, in 2014 OMB formed this interagency working group or the IWG to exchange research findings and identify implementation issues that agencies may be having and also collaborate on a shared research agenda to find ways to improve federal statistics on race and ethnicity.

The IWG is chaired by OMB's Statistical and Science Policy Office and the working group includes representatives from cabinet departments and other agencies that are engaged in the collection or the use of federal data on race and ethnicity statistics.

Specifically within the last year the IWG formed several subgroups to examine different aspects of the '97 standards and these subgroups are

focusing on (1) examining whether an approach with two separate questions, one question on Hispanic origin and one question on race, or an approach with one combined question on race and ethnicity yields more accurate data on the changing and growing diversity of our U.S. population.

A second subgroup is exploring the use of a distinct category for respondents of Middle Eastern or North African heritage. A third subgroup is looking at improving the understanding of the intended use of “minimum categories” as defined in the OMB standards. And a fourth subgroup is evaluating the terminology used in the current standards and whether some of the terms employed are outdated or need revision or replacement.

Through monthly and often more frequent robust discussions, the IWG and all of its colleagues are working together to develop analytical research plans to investigate these topics and the IWG used previous research as well as new empirical research like the 2015 national content test findings to evaluate the quality of and also the challenges with our different agencies’ data on race and ethnicity.

The Census Bureau led a lot this with the 2015 national content test and we have just released some of those preliminary results and they’re helping to provide a really important foundation for examining and discussing these particular elements of the IWG’s explorations.

Now in terms of the current Federal Register notice process I’m going to give you a little bit of information about what’s coming up next. I believe that everyone has seen the first Federal Register notice that was issued on September 30 and it signaled as Katherine said OMB’s review and possible limited revision of its 1997 standards. It has a 30 day comment period which ends on October 31 later this month.

In addition there are plans for a second Federal Register notice which OMB is aiming to publish immediately upon the closing of the comment period of the first Federal Register notice.

And that Federal Register notice will include the IWG's responses to the different themes from comments from the public that came in response to the first Federal Register notice, also the IWG's analyses from recent research that was conducted on the four different research areas that I just talked about, and also the IWG's recommendations to OMB about the public comments from the first Federal Register notice and the IWG's research. The second FRN will have either a 30 or a 45 day comment period.

Then a third Federal Register notice and the potential final Federal Register notice has a goal of being published before the end of the calendar year and it will include OMB's decisions based on (1) the IWG's recommendations that are detailed in the second Federal Register; (2) public comments that are received in response to the second Federal Register notice; and (3) any additional research that has been undertaken by the IWG to date.

Again I just wanted to go back over the primary proposed revisions that are discussed in the first Federal Register notice. One is the use of question format and whether separate questions on race and Hispanic origin or a combined question on race and ethnicity would be recommended. The second part of the FRN talks about potential revisions with the classification of a Middle Eastern and North African category and the use of a distinct category.

Third, there is a description of the intended use of minimum reporting categories. And for this one I wanted to give you a little bit more information about what that is intended to get comments on.

As you may know the '97 standard provides a minimum set of racial and ethnic categories for use when federal agencies are collecting and presenting information. And this minimum set of racial and ethnic categories includes a category for American Indian or Alaskan Native, a category for Asian, a category for Black or African American, a category for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, a category for Hispanic or Latino, and a category for White.

While the '97 standards provide these six categories, they don't prohibit the collection and presentation of additional data and additional detailed categories as long as those additional categories can be totaled into the minimum set of the six categories for comparative purposes.

The current standard utilizes the following description regarding the intended use of "minimum reporting categories." It says that in no case shall the provisions of the standards be construed to limit the collection of data to the set of the categories described above. The collection of greater detail is encouraged.

We wanted to note this because it also is part of how OMB has encouraged federal agencies within the federal statistical system to collect detailed data. And there are examples of federal agencies collecting detailed race and ethnicity data are numerous but it has become clear that the '97 description of the intended use of that aforementioned "minimum reporting categories" may be misunderstood and may lead people to believe that these six categories are the only acceptable reporting categories.

So OMB has asked the federal interagency working group to examine the language that is used in the '97 standard in order to improve the understanding of the use of minimum reporting categories.

Again the intention of the minimum categories as prescribed in the OMB standard is not to limit detailed racial and ethnic detail data -- instead it is meant to facilitate comparison across information collections. So with that I'm going to turn it back over to Katherine to talk about some of the logistics for the Federal Register notice comment process.

Katherine Wallman: Thank you Nicholas. I'm sorry, I had to remember to unmute my phone. A bad habit I have of muting it so that we cut the background noise and then I start talking and can't understand why nobody is listening.

So I just want to go back to some information that you may already know but I want to highlight and that is Nicholas mentioned that the comments on this Federal Register notice are due on October 31. I had it pointed out to me this morning that is actually 31 days from September 30. This is a fact of the calendar that the 30th is - of October is a Sunday as you may know if you have kids who are getting ready for Halloween so the comments are actually due on the 31 on that Monday.

The comments can be submitted as it says in the Federal Register notice, they can be submitted by going online or by email or by what we all have come to know fondly as snail mail. I would urge you personally to use some sort of electronic communication to send your comments.

Since anthrax and so on came on the scene some years back, any mail that comes to the executive office of the president goes through all kinds of processes before it can ever reach our desk. And as I have said to many

people, by the time documents get to us they feel like they have come from Jeffersonian times. They're kind of crinkly and yellow. So but more importantly the timeliness is very important so I really do urge you to use the more modern forms of communication if at all possible.

The - I think the most important thing about this is that we get comments that are substantive and that give us answers or potential answers as well as comments that raise questions and concerns. Because we truly are seeking views on what people think we ought to be doing.

And it reminds me of when we used to turn in papers in school and if the teacher gave us a C or a D but no comments as to how to improve our work, it didn't really have as much benefit to us. So we are seeking you not only to grade our papers but also to give us some advice as to how we might improve for the next time.

So Nicholas and I guess together want to encourage you to provide solutions as well as to identify any issues or concerns. We would like to urge you to be as concise as possible. I think Sam mentioned at the outset of this phone call that we're delighted we're going to be able to take questions. If we have upwards of 200 people really on this line, we would encourage you to be concise in asking those questions and we will try to be concise but informative in answering any questions you may have.

So with that I think I'd rather spend time asking or answering questions than going over and over the ways to present your comments to us. If you have questions about that we can certainly address those as well.

Sam Go: Great. Thank you both Katherine and Nicholas. Let's start the Q&A session. Operator you can open the queue for questions.

Coordinator: Thank you Sam. We will now begin the question and answer session for today's conference. To ask a question press Star followed by the number 1 on your phone. Unmute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Your name is required to introduce your question. To cancel your question press Star followed by the number 2. One moment for the first question. And our first question is coming from (Joey Peterson) from (Field) and Associates Law Office. (Joey) your line is open.

(Carey Peterson): Oh thank you. Thank you for having me on the call today. It's actually (Carey Peterson) from (Peterson, Field), and Associates. I had a question. Due to the fact that the Hispanic Americans and Latino Americans make up over 17% of the U.S. population in total, an issue that pertains to myself personally due to the fact that I am a Latino American but I'm not a Hispanic American.

Was it ever considered that the new race category Latino Hispanic could be as much of a contrast as the Asian Pacific Islander race category that will be separated into two categories upon approval of the current proposal on the table today?

Sam Go: Katherine or Nicholas?

Katherine Wallman: Am I understanding the question correctly that Mr. (Peterson) would like to know if we are considering separating the Hispanic or Latino category into two categories?

(Carey Peterson): Yes ma'am, that is correct.

Katherine Wallman: We have not done any testing along those lines to my knowledge.
Nicholas?

Nicholas Jones: No, the way in which the category Hispanic or Latino is explained is documented in the current '97 standards and it's meant to be an overarching category for the people who are identifying with certain nationalities.

If you're thinking of something like the separation of a Brazilian response that may be considered by some as Latin American that's not currently included in the category Hispanic or Latino but people certainly identify and report with those particular categories.

We want to remind everyone if you do have a comment about something like this we would encourage you to write that into the FRN itself and that way it can be addressed formally.

(Carey Peterson): Understood. Who would I make that memo attention to?

Katherine Wallman: That's part of the - what we were talking about before but I'll repeat it. It's race-ethnicity@omb.eop.gov. And that's the central place where we're receiving all public comments.

(Carey Peterson): Very well, I'll arrange something and prepare it and draft it and send it over. Appreciate it, thank you very much.

Katherine Wallman: Great, thank you.

Sam Go: Thank you. Let's move on to the next question.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from Sylvester. Sylvester your line is open.

(Sylvester Okere): Thank you. Yes my name is Sylvester Okere, I'm the president for United People for African Congress. My question is this. Will OMB make any effort to properly identify the ethnic Africans? Just like the previous question we are classified as African American and more like clustered or being (unintelligible).

One instance is an incident that happened during Ebola. If we will recall my (Unintelligible) cannot remark that black was Africans and not an option. (Unintelligible) question again about North Africa. Why is North Africa separated from (unintelligible) Africa?

Nicholas Jones: Katherine if you'd like to talk about the current definitions I can talk about some of the research that we're doing to look at this.

Katherine Wallman: In the current definition, and Nicholas mentioned this. In the current definition surrounding the black or African American categories there is no separation in aggregate reporting. In more detailed reporting that might be undertaken by something like the Census Bureau in the decennial census there is more discrete reporting option available. But I think Nicholas would like to add to what I'm saying in terms of the testing that they've been doing.

Nicholas Jones: Thanks Katherine. So as part of our 2015 National Content Test we undertook research to try and figure out ways to collect and produce data for myriad categories. Not just detailed categories that may have been reported in the past but also ones that have never been reported through the decennial census question on race for detailed black, or African-American or Afro Caribbean groups as well as detailed European groups and detail groups from the Middle East and North Africa. So the research that we are going to be talking about this fall really shows some improvements in ways that we've been able to collect that data and to find ways to produce that data in the future for the

communities who are reporting responses such as Somali, or Sudanese or Egyptian. And I think this will help to address the questions that you've raised.

(Sylvester Okere): Yes. Well we hope that that would improve that because seeing that the 2010 Census did not represent the population of (African) and that has (unintelligible) our progress. So profile identification and recording will help us because we have the population but we have kind of marginalized.

Nicholas Jones: Okay. And again it will be helpful if you do provide that comment to the Federal Register Notice with the address the Katherine provided. And Sam and Doua if you're able if you haven't already I believe that, that information was shared with everyone who registered for the call but it might be helpful as a follow-up just so that everyone knows where to provide...

(Sylvester Okere): Right.

Sam Go: Great sure. That's fine. Okay. Operator let's move on to the next question please.

Coordinator: Thank you. Next question is from (Alayna Ang). (Alayna), your line is open. Oh I'm sorry it's (Ben). Your line is open.

Man: The next two are...

Coordinator: Hello (Ben), your line is open.

Man: Okay.

Coordinator: Let's proceed.

Man: Okay sure....

Coordinator: Our next question is from (Alayna Ang).

(Alayna Ang): Thank you Katherine and Nicholas for presenting today. I wanted to say that data disaggregation is particularly important to me in terms of measuring the obtainment of health equity among people of color in particular. And I want organizations like the National Science Foundation to be able to identify which groups and in particular which Asian American and Pacific Islander subgroups could be identified as an underrepresented minority because currently they only recommend that Pacific Islanders subgroups be identified as such.

And so I'm particularly looking - interested in making sure that the data is disaggregated sufficiently from the census end looking at health professionals by these particular subgroups and reported out that way so that the NSF, and the public at large and policymakers can make appropriate recommendations. So my question to you is will we - are we looking at ways to capture this information from the reporting standards?

Katherine Wallman: I'll start and Nicholas may want to continue. We and yes in the broadest sense we are anxious and have always been anxious or at least for 20 years have been anxious to get more disaggregated information on various populations to the extent as you obviously recognize and suggest to the extent that there are differences in the outcomes for different groups within groups.

And that said I think it's important to recognize and I'm sure you do that while the decennial census or the American Community Survey may be able not only to collect such data but also to present if you will, to disseminate to

provide product with data at those highly disaggregated levels many of our surveys don't have sample sizes large enough frankly to produce data on the output side that reflects all of the disaggregated categories.

And I do have some concern about collecting information and then not being able to turn it back to people because it's not robust enough or it doesn't have enough cases that we would be reviewing people's identities or so on by releasing that information. We are very much interested in pursuing what you're talking about. We do always have to balance how much information detailed information can be collected against the cost not to the government so much but yes to the government but also to the respondents in terms of what we refer to as respondent burden. Nicholas, do you want to add to what I've said?

Nicholas Jones: No. That was great Katherine. Thank you.

Sam Go: All right.

Katherine Wallman: We didn't practice.

Sam Go: Great. Thank you very much for that question. Operator, could you please move on to the next question?

Coordinator: Thank you. Next question is from Terry Minnis. Terry, your line is open.

(Terry Minnis): Thank you. And thank you Katherine and Nicholas. Terry Minnis with Asian Americans Advancing Justice AAJC. And my question I guess is more about the process. I am a little concerned that this seems to be a very fast track process. If I recall correctly and as you all were mentioning in the 90s I believe it was a three year process from the signaling Federal Register Notice

to the final notice. And I am a little concerned. Nicholas I think you mentioned that the expectation is to turn around a second Federal Register Notice right after the end of the close of this Federal Register Notice but that you would also be responsive to all the comments that come in. How is that flow if the comments aren't coming in until say October 31?

And I am also concerned if I heard you correctly that the second round of the Federal Register Notices would be a 30 or 45 day, you know, period comment period. And if I recall correctly you – the Census Bureau does not intend to have the full results of the National Content Test out until maybe January or early next year. And so I question how are we - as you know many of us have been waiting eagerly to peruse the data results and really make, you know, good substantive informed substantive into comments. But I fear the time frame that you all are putting on this process is going to negatively impact our ability to do so. So can you please talk a little bit more about why this process is so fast tracked? And if there is a possibility to actually extend the period so that people can thoughtfully engage on these topics? Thank you.

Katherine Wallman: I'll start. I would like to do a little bit a moment of comparison between what we were doing in the 90s and for good or ill I was person in charge in the 90s so I have some personal knowledge of what was done. And what we're trying to do at this juncture and I just I - this won't completely address your question but it may impart speak to your question. In the 90s when we took on this role the first notice we put out in the time period '93 '94 was really an open a much more open broad invitation in terms of what changes if any we should be making in the standards for data on race and ethnicity that the federal government collects.

And we actually were using that process to define or determine what sorts of issues were out there and what kinds of research we would need to be doing.

In this cycle we've had implementation experience if you will now for more than a decade with the categories that were put in place towards the end of the 90s and with the 2000 census really. And that experience has led us to this narrower set of questions that we've been trying to address and research that's more recent. So - and I would only lay that down in order to say that our intention with our first notice this time was somewhat more limited in scope than what we did with our notice initial notice in the 1990s.

That said I appreciate the concern that you've raised in terms of the timing and so on. We have some concerns about the interaction - intersection of the timing of any standard changes that might be afoot and the timing that's needed for the presentation of information about what will be on census 2020 and it's that intersection of timing concerns that has been driving a bit this timing of this particular part of the process. Nicholas may want to add to this.

Nicholas Jones: Thanks Katherine. I did want to have one other clarification point in this Terry will also give some good insight to the process itself. It's not only the Census Bureau's research with the 2015 National Content Test that's going to be used to evaluate the particular feedback, and the comments and the things that we're discussing regarding these topic areas but it's a big part of it. And the inter-agency working group has been discussing and reviewing the findings from the NCT and are using their thoughts and their collaborative discussions about that work and other work that federal agencies have undertaken to help address the comments that come in from the public and also to describe and propose solutions to those four specific areas that we outlined today.

So with the subgroups focusing on the different question format approaches the use of MENA Middle Eastern or North African category, the use of the intended minimum categories language in the current standard and also evaluating the terminology that's in the current standard these are the specific

topics that the IWG is working on to make recommendations to OMB. And that's how that is going to be structured in the second FRN to explain what the IWG has researched and recommended in conjunction with the feedback that we hear from the public.

(Terry Minnis): And I appreciate that Nicholas and Katherine but I guess what I'm seeing is your time frame while may be work for the interagency working group because you all have been talking about the results the public has not had that same benefit of those discussions and having access. And so if you want us to be able to provide quality substantive comments I'm saying we need the time to be able to review the research and review the recommendation. And to really and perhaps to talk with one another so that we can make sure there's alignment across different communities saying that, that timeframe makes it virtually impossible.

And if I might Nicholas and perhaps you can correct me if I'm remembering this incorrectly but I thought that with all of the discussion around the tribal enrollment question and whatnot the what I thought I heard from the Census Bureau was that what you are submitting to Congress on April 1 2017 is sort of the proposed topic. So that things didn't necessarily need to be completely locked down and finalized.

And if that's the case I understand trying to workforce them but I if I understood that correctly that doesn't seem like a hard deadline where we absolutely must get this done before that time. And I would pause that it is critically important that we all get this right together and to take the time to do that rather than to rush this for some arbitrary deadline that will - that may result in something that doesn't actually work for our community.

Nicholas Jones: Okay, okay.

Doua Thor: Thank you Terry for that comment piece. And I'll check in with Nicholas and Katherine off line also. And my understanding Nicholas is that as comments actually are coming you will not - you all are not waiting until the very last day to look at that but you are continuously already looking at them now.

Nicholas Jones: That's absolutely correct. And that's part of the way that the FRN process works. So comments that have already come in we have been looking at and developing responses to them. And, you know, for other examples we often get a few comments of federal notices but we expect with one like this and the importance of this one we - and we for the 2015 National Content Test FRN received tens of thousands of comments which we did review and process and address. So it's something that has the full attention of both OMB and the federal agencies. And that's where this work is so important that we do get the feedback from the public and we will work to address it.

Doua Thor: Yes. And I'll just make one last comment this is Doua. If individuals feel strongly about a timeline or a proposed solution that you want to give to the interagency working group that you submit that directly to the FRN. So we're going to move on to the next question.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from (Maria Scott). (Maria) your line is open.

(Maria Scott): Thank you for having me. This is (Maria Scott). I'm calling from UPAC, United People for African Congress. I just want to reiterate again and my question about how is the process done? How many applicants sit at the table to make decision on our behalf? And why isn't it Africans still on the category side when it comes to census and statistic and anything involving counting because we cannot be mixed with African-Americans, we are Africans.

And maybe by the categorized as African and then maybe with a blank there we can put our country. We cannot put ethnicity's there because Africa is - has 54 countries. And our ethnicities are very huge. We cannot put Fulani, or Mandembo or any of that. I think it would be good to put just the country where we come from less than Nigeria, Mali, Ivory Coast things like that not the ethnicity because it's totally going to be too much to be counted? That was my question. Thank you for having me and if you can speak louder because it's hard to hear you. Thank you.

Nicholas Jones: Okay. This is Nicholas again. Thank you for your comment. And I think that this - the question that you're raising addresses a lot of the interest from different communities across the country in having data that is reported and then also provided as an outcome variable to communities that are interested in responses and data and characteristics for groups that may be Nigerian, or Korean or Mexican, et cetera.

That's part of the research that we've been undertaking to find whether there are ways to collect and accurately tabulate data for these detailed disaggregated communities. And as Katherine also pointed out earlier while we have the robustness and the depth of something like a census or in American Community Survey to collect that data and report it out we do recognize some of the constraints and challenges of doing so with smaller surveys. But you should understand that it's ultimately absolutely the attempt to as much as possible collect and provide that detailed disaggregated data where appropriate.

Man: Okay.

Sam Go: Great, thank you very much for that question. Operator, could you please proceed with the next question?

Coordinator: Thank you. The next question is from (Moheni Lau). (Moheni), your line is open.

(Moheni Lau): Hi. Thanks for holding this call. My question is just in the interest of not being redundant making sure we don't ask a question in our comment or propose something in our comment that you've already considered is and the data collected in the working groups did the addition of the MENA category have an effect on the AAPI category? Did those did it subtract people from AAPI? Was there any sort of interplay? What is the addition of MENA due to the existing categories essentially?

Nicholas Jones: This is Nicholas. I can talk briefly about some of this but I may also refer you to a longer presentation that we've made and we'll be continue to talk about some of the research that came out of the 2015 National Content Test. We found similar proportions for groups even when a MENA category was used. So it didn't have an impact on groups reporting as Asian or groups reporting on as African, or African American, et cetera. But I will follow-up with Doua and Sam to send you a link and everyone a link to the research that we recently released at the Census Bureau. And that may be something that you want to follow-up in more detail with us to learn about the findings.

Sam Go: Great, thank you very much for that question. Operator, can you please proceed with the next question.

Coordinator: Thank you. The next question is from (Emily). (Emily), your line is open.

(Emily): Hi. I just had a quick question. Can an individual and an organization submit to their own - his or her own individual comment in addition to joining another organization's comment? So essentially what I'm asking is whether or

not an individual can submit more than one comment in response to the notice?

Katherine Wallman: This is Katherine. I see no reason that would – (problem) with that. Yes you may.

Sam Go: Great, thank you very much for that question. Operator, can you please proceed with the next question?

Coordinator: Thank you. That is question is from (Angela Yip). (Angela) your line is open.

(Angela Yip): Hi. Thank you so much. My question is regarding the Chinese-American community. I want to know how will this change affect Chinese-Americans?

Sam Go: Katherine or Nicholas?

Nicholas Jones: Could you be a little bit more specific? I'm not sure how to address your question in terms of the impact? Are you asking about the particular topics that are being explored within the FRN?

(Angela Yip): Yes. If you can respond generally regarding programs or services affecting that will be assessable to Asian American - to Chinese-Americans excuse me.

Katherine Wallman: This is Katherine. And I am not aware of any specific implications this has for programs that are aware of the Chinese-Americans.

Sam Go: All right.

(Angela Yip): Thank you.

Sam Go: Okay. Thank you very much. Operator, can you please proceed with the next question? And just to remind everyone if you want to ask a question just press Star 1 to be entered into the queue. Operator, please proceed.

Coordinator: Thank you for the reminder Sam. And our next question is from (Andreas). (Andreas), your line is open.

(Andreas Castro Amejor): Hi everyone. My name is (Andreas Castro Amejor). I'm at the University of Pennsylvania. And I had a question for more clarification on the third domain for which you are seeking comment on the intent of minimum categories. I wanted to learn a little bit more whether the extent of recommendations that you're seeking has to do with the current considerations given to the burden for respondents and whether that has also affected other statistical agencies ability to desegregate for example when respondents have two or more races? Is the intent or the expectation that perhaps we encourage agencies to expand the listings so that it further disaggregated through the OMB's recommendation?

Nicholas Jones: Katherine, do you have...

Katherine Wallman: Nicholas is being quiet because he believes this is my question and he's probably right. I think an answer to the question what I most would want to say is that really I mentioned the burden issue. And I also mentioned whether the agency can support for with resources the ability to have the sample large enough to get meaningful information on more detailed categories. So I said that.

But I would note in addition that I sort of noted or hinted if I can say it flat out at the beginning of this conversation that it's really up to the agencies to determine how detailed the information that - how detailed - what level of

detailed information they need and should have for in general for implementing their program. So for example if it's a health program and it makes a difference in terms of health outcomes to have greater detail for example on the multiple race origins of people who are in a survey then the health people would be justifying that and should be probably asking for that level of information.

If it's an education program where the outcome may depend on whether one is from a particular part of the Asian subgroup for example then it's up to that education agency to be asking and justifying asking for that level of detail. So it - we always encourage agencies to collect the appropriate level of detail for the purposes for which they're collecting information. And we have done that in the past and we will continue to do that. As far as a blanket encouragement that everybody should no matter what being collecting greater detail on every single information collection I think that is a less likely scenario.

Sam Go: All right. Thank you very much. We're going to take one last question. And for those individuals who were unable to - who we were unable to get to your question we ask that you send that via email to race-ethnicity@omb.eop.gov. So operator, can you queue up the final question?

Coordinator: Thank you Sam. Our final question is from (Chan Thompson). (Chan), your line is open. Hello (Chan), your line is open.

(Chan Thompson): Yes. I'm speaking right now. Did you hear me?

Man: Yes.

(Chan Thompson): Yes. Hi Katherine and Nicholas. Thank you for the nice presentation. What I heard if I heard it correctly is that it's only category. But one of the

category is Asian. I wonder if you have any more detail on make the Asian separation to Southeast Asian because the Southeast Asian is a large group that don't have the same equity, and education and have employment the same as Asian. And this is just a very important if they have this aggregate the data for the Southeast Asian.

Nicholas Jones: Thank you for your comment. This is Nicholas. What you're talking about really summarizes nicely what one of the main goals of this exploration is to see how we can provide the data that would be used by organizations and individuals to understand these differences that you're talking about. And as Katherine mentioned where appropriate the agencies with surveys that are able to support this level of detail disaggregated data are being encouraged to collect and provide that back to the public.

And with other data collections that are much more robust we're looking at ways that we can improve the data collection for these detailed myriad groups not only the ones that we've collected and produced data on in the past but also communities where we've never been able to produce detail disaggregated for data for such as Black, or African-American communities, European communities, and Middle Eastern and North African communities.

So we're looking to provide even more details than we ever have in the past through the census data collections. And part of what we're looking for feedback on from the public is your interest and your comments on that particular goal. So we thank you for all of these comments today and we want to make sure that everyone again remembers to provide their comments in writing particularly electronically as Katherine mentioned to get them to us as quickly as possible. And we'll look forward to the ongoing conversations as we move forward.

Sam Go: All right. Well thank you very much thank you both Katherine and Nicholas for providing your time and insight into this issue. Again thank you all for participating in this call. A recording of this call will be uploaded to our Web site. And also look for our frequently asked questions which will be uploaded to our site as well. As Katherine mentioned OMB will - may have a Webinar. So look for that in the coming weeks. And again please submit your comments with regards to this Federal Register Notice in advance of October 31 if possible but definitely by that time. So again thank you everyone and this call has concluded.

Coordinator: That concludes today's conference. Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.

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