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**SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION, FEDERAL SERVICES, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**HEARING: "Countdown to Census Day: Progress Report on the Census Bureau's Preparedness
for the Enumeration"**

Opening Statement of Senator Thomas R. Carper, Chairman

Today is the continuation of our oversight efforts related to the upcoming 2010 Census. As many of you may know, the road to the 2010 Census has been anything but easy, and this Subcommittee has held several hearings on many of the operational and organizational challenges that have threatened the success of the 2010 Census. While we are far from done, I think we can all take pride in the excellent work of Dr. Groves, his predecessor, Dr. Murdock, and the career professionals at the Census Bureau who have worked very hard over the past few months to get the census back on track.

This year's census will be by far the most expensive in the nation's history, even taking inflation into account. So far, the cost of the 2010 census is estimated at \$14.7 billion, reflecting an increase of \$3.2 billion just over the last two years. Although there are only 37 days remaining until Census Day, the 2010 Census has, at long last, begun in certain parts of the country. The population tally officially began in late January in remote parts of Alaska, and the Bureau is now revving up for full-scale operations.

Overall, things seem to be going according to plan. Recruiting is on track; census questionnaires have been printed and are scheduled to be mailed out in mid-March; local census offices are open and operational; and the advertising campaign is moving smoothly into its active phase. However, given the sheer magnitude of such an undertaking as the decennial census, problems are to be expected. Investigations performed by GAO and the Commerce Department's Inspector General have raised concerns that the Bureau is behind on testing and the full development of some of its key information technology systems. In December, the Bureau conducted two operational tests of the computer networks supporting decennial operations, which revealed critical defects and IT performance problems.

More recently, a quarterly report issued last week by the Commerce Inspector General noted that the Bureau wasted millions of dollars on workers who were hired and trained last year for temporary positions by the Census Bureau but never worked for the agency and others who overbilled for travel expenses.

In addition to the operational issues that I previously mentioned, undercounting remains a serious challenge for many communities throughout this country. In 2000, 6.4 million people were missed, many of whom were minorities and children. Reaching out to those who are historically hard to count is even more important when you consider that, for every 1 percent of the population that does respond to the census, we're going to have to spend \$85 million, I'm told, to go door to door to get everyone counted. It is vitally important, then, that we do the necessary hard work now so that we get an accurate, cost-effective count in 2010 that will serve us well in the next decade.

With that said, I look forward to the expert testimony our distinguished panel of witnesses will provide today. It is my hope that today's proceedings will provide us with a clear assessment of the complications facing the Census Bureau, and how Congress can best partner with the Bureau as it works towards achieving its goal of an accurate and cost-effective Census in 2010.

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