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Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have today signed into law H.R. 11337, a bill to provide for a mid-decade census of population. The first such census will be in 1985; subsequent ones will follow every 10 years.

Passage of this bill provides us with a major opportunity to improve the statistical information which is often the basis for decisions on major issues of public policy. With better information available at 5-year intervals we will no longer need to rely on data which are often obsolete. The historic method of counting the population every 10 years simply does not meet the Nation's current needs.

This legislation will also make it possible for us to update Federal statistical programs dealing with social statistics, since the mid-decade effort will provide for a periodic updating of significant national, social and demographic characteristics. This is important because

- . \$39 billion are distributed annually using formulae which use population data.
- . Federal, State and local planners depend heavily on current population data.
- . The need for a variety of expensive "ad hoc" surveys between censuses will be reduced.
- . We will be able to identify the needs of various groups in the American public.

By authorizing the use of sampling techniques to collect mid-decade census data, the bill will reduce the burden on respondents. It also allows considerable flexibility in the design of the effort, making possible major cost savings in special purpose statistical programs now conducted between decennial census dates.

The bill also strengthens the provisions of law relating to the confidentiality of census information, and thus helps to assure that the privacy of the individual is preserved.

I commend the Congress for passing this legislation; it will provide us with better data, of greater consistency, at a reduced cost.

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