



December 8, 2022

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Chair
The Honorable Jerry Moran, Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Matt Cartwright, Chairman
The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee

RE: FY23 CJS report language on the Ask U.S. Panel

Dear Chair Shaheen, Chairman Cartwright, Ranking Member Moran, and Ranking Member Aderholt,

On behalf of the Insights Association, the leading nonprofit trade association for the market research and data analytics industry, I urge that any final FY23 appropriations omnibus report includes report language from the Senate Appropriations Committee's draft FY23 bill on the Census Bureau's Ask U.S. Panel.

The report language in question, from the Senate Appropriations draft report, reads: *"The Committee is concerned about the lack of transparency related to the Census Bureau's plans for implementation of the Ask U.S. Panel Survey, particularly given the lack of congressional authorization and the expanding scope of the project since it was initially announced. The Bureau is directed to provide a report to the Committee, no later than 60 days following enactment of this act, on the Ask U.S. Panel Survey's methodology, data collection processes, implementation, incurred and projected costs, and procurement strategy."*

The House's report language was much less impactful.¹

As the Insights Association testified to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees,² we remain gravely concerned about the shaky rationale and lack of need for the Bureau's Ask U.S. Panel -- a plan to develop its own probability-based research panel -- given numerous private sector insights companies and organizations already provide well-established high-quality online panels, including probability-based ones. The project is also anti-competitive, given these existing panels and the Bureau's intent to fund an additional insights firm to build one that will be used to compete against the rest of the industry using intellectual property funded directly by federal taxpayers.

While the Insights Association would prefer a prohibition on FY23 funds, the Senate draft's report language would help bring transparency to a particularly murky project and contracting process that is already subject to investigation by the Commerce Department's Inspector General. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Howard Fienberg
Senior VP, Advocacy
The Insights Association

¹ "The Committee acknowledges the ongoing work of the OIG regarding the "Evaluation of the U.S. Census Bureau's Award and Use of a Cooperative Agreement (#2022-420)" and expects the OIG to keep the Committee apprised of its findings." <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP00/20220628/114966/HMKP-117-AP00-20220628-SD004.PDF>

² <https://www.insightsassociation.org/Portals/INSIGHTS/Docs%20to%20link/IA-testimony-SenateCJS-AskUSpanel-CensusBureau-5-26-22.pdf> and <https://www.insightsassociation.org/Portals/INSIGHTS/Docs%20to%20link/IA%20testimony%20HouseCJS%20AskUSpanel%20CensusBureau%205-13-22.pdf>