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Joint Statement of Chairman Towns, Clay on the 2010 Census

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Representative Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY), Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and U.S. Representative William Lacy Clay (D-MO), Chairman of the Information Policy, Census and National Archives Subcommittee today released the following statement regarding oversight of the 2010 Census:

“The success of the 2010 Census is of utmost concern for this Committee. We are committed to strict bipartisan oversight of its implementation so that the fairest assessment of the American population is reported.

“The Obama Administration inherited a Census Bureau that has failed to demonstrate its ability to successfully carry out the 2010 Census. We are deeply concerned that the Census Bureau will not be able to complete its constitutionally mandated responsibility to count U.S. residents without immediate and sustained attention from the Administration.

“We have already been warned by GAO that the 2010 Census is in serious trouble and has been placed on GAO’s list of programs at high risk. The Census Bureau still does not know if all of its operations and systems, particularly those that will be used for the first time in 2010, will work together under the pressure of the census. And with the clock ticking – we are less than

eleven months away from launching the 2010 Census – the Census Bureau has little time to improve its capabilities.

“Yesterday, the White House clarified its position on the 2010 Census and said that they have no intention of removing the Census from the Commerce Department. The White House also made it clear that they will not interfere with the work of this committee or any Congressional committees with oversight authority. We appreciate the White House’s respect for this Committee’s important work and we intend to conduct bipartisan oversight of the Census.

“The stakes are too high for the 2010 Census to fail. We need to have a Census Bureau director nominated and confirmed as soon as possible. Then we can focus on the important work of organizing the Census Bureau and ensuring that it is prepared to support the activities of the 2010 Census.”

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The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the main investigative committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. It has authority to investigate the subjects within the Committee’s legislative jurisdiction as well as “any matter” within the jurisdiction of the other standing House Committees.