**Opening Statement,**

**Ranking Member Robin Kelly (IL-02)**

**Subcommittee on Information Technology**

**Hearing on Preparing for the 2020 Census: Will the Technology be Ready?**

**Nov. 3, 2015**

Good afternoon.  Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing.  I would also like to extend my thanks to the witnesses here today.

The purpose of this oversight hearing is to determine if the Census Bureau’s plan for the 2020 Census is sufficient to ensure a complete and accurate count of the nation’s population.

**Getting an accurate count is important.  Numerous key decisions are based on data collected from the Decennial Census.  Census data is integral in determining the equitable distribution of federal funds, enforcing civil and voting rights legislation, and determining Congressional apportionment, among other things.**

            With advances in technology, we have tools available to help administer the Census more efficiently and accurately.

For instance, in October 2014, the Bureau began an enterprise-wide IT initiative called the Census Enterprise Data Collection and Processing (CEDCAP) program, which is intended to—and I quote:

“deliver a ‘system of systems’ to serve all of the Bureau’s survey data collection and processing functions—

rather than continuing to build and maintain unique, survey-specific systems with redundant capabilities.”

            CEDCAP will help reengineer field work by implementing an operational control system to track and manage field assignments. This will help census takers decide—using real-time data—which houses to visit on a daily basis. CEDCAP will also be responsible for the development of a web-based survey application in order to maximize Internet self-response.

The 2020 Census will be the first Census with the option of responding online. The Bureau will rely heavily on Internet responses as part of its cost saving initiatives. The Bureau has also decided to use mobile devices for field data collection purposes. **The Bureau estimates it will save nearly $400 million through the increased use of technology, which is certainly to be commended.**

**While technology can help increase efficiency, which yields significant savings, I am also concerned about the safety of the public’s personal information.**  As you may know, the Bureau experienced a data breach in July. While no sensitive information was stolen, this incident underscores the importance of having controls in place to protect sensitive information.

I applaud the Bureau for responding swiftly to the breach and recognizing the need for continued monitoring of their systems.  It is our job to ensure that these agencies have the resources they need to keep our private information safe from hackers.

Additionally, I share GAO’s concerns that a number of important IT decisions have yet to be made for the 2020 Census.

GAO recommends that key IT decisions be made quickly, or we’ll find ourselves in the situation we saw in 2010, where a costly IT project went awry, causing turmoil for the entire census operation.

I look forward to hearing from the Bureau regarding its ability to meet critical milestones as they finalize plans for 2020.

And I look forward to a productive discussion on this vital issue.

I yield back the balance of my time.