

768 Individuals, 90 Organizations Highlight Challenges, Risks for Federal Economic Statistics to Congress, Administration

Alexandria, VA (February 18, 2025) –The United States faces an infrastructure crisis nearly as grave as our decaying roads and bridges. Our declining capability to produce social and economic statistics will directly undermine economic growth and the goal of widely shared prosperity. That is why 768 individuals and 90 organizations signed a [letter](#) to Congress and the administration warning of potentially serious consequences for continued underfunding of and inattention to the federal agencies responsible for producing the nation’s critical economic statistics—the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the U.S. Census Bureau.

“Our nation’s economic statistics are the foundation, the key infrastructure, of critical, private and public decisions from government budgets and monetary policy to investments in factories and worker training—decisions that ripple through markets, shape economic growth and impact jobs nationwide,” stated William Beach, BLS commissioner from 2019 to 2023 and an organizer of this letter. “Ensuring these statistics are as comprehensive and accurate as possible is essential for a thriving economy, which is a goal that surely any Congress and administration would support.”

“Federal economic statistics power the macroeconomic dashboards of U.S. businesses, equipping decision-makers with critical insights to navigate market trends, anticipate consumer behavior and develop effective strategies,” said Tom Beers, executive director of the National Association for Business Economics, whose members include chief economists for many of the nation’s largest companies. “From demand forecasting to workforce management, businesses rely on accurate, timely federal data to stay competitive.”

“Federal economic statistics from agencies like the BEA, BLS, and Census are critical for businesses navigating an ever-changing marketplace,” added Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist of the National Retail Federation, and past president of the National Association for Business Economics. “These data sources provide essential insights into consumer spending, employment trends, inflation, and economic growth—helping

retailers efficiently stock shelves, set prices, and staff the sales floor as consumer demand fluctuates.”

The signatories highlight that decades of declining purchasing power, increasing costs of data acquisition and budgetary constraints have forced these agencies to defer upgrades and make cuts. In 2024, for example, the BEA discontinued three statistical products and 24 tables and indefinitely delayed another product due to financial pressures. Similarly, the BLS recently announced it would have to reduce the sample size for the Current Population Survey—the key source of U.S. unemployment statistics—by 8% due to funding shortfalls, a move that would significantly weaken the accuracy of employment data. Since the writing of the letter, [BLS announced](#) it was discontinuing Consumer Price Index publications for all metropolitan areas, census divisions and regional size classes for electricity, natural gas, energy services, fuels and utilities and household energy.

The letter warns that, without intervention, the quality and availability of data will likely decline, undermining major economic and policy decisions. The letter also points to the risks of following international examples of statistical decline. The United Kingdom has faced serious challenges with its employment statistics due to plummeting survey response rates, highlighting the consequences of failing to modernize data-collection efforts.

“Only Congress and the administration can reverse this downward spiral and protect our national statistical infrastructure,” said Erica Groshen, BLS commissioner from 2013 to 2017 and co-chair of Friends of BLS with Beach. “After decades of neglect, these agencies sorely need resources to modernize their surveys, transition to new data sources and collection methods and ensure that economic statistics remain a reliable guide for policymakers, businesses and the public. Otherwise, we face a future of lousy decisions made on the basis of lousy data.”

Michael Strain, director of the economic policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute and a letter-signer, added, “The return on investment in the federal statistical system is enormous, as is the cost of neglecting our statistical agencies.”

For more information or to schedule an interview with representatives from the coalition, please contact Steve Pierson at spierson@amstat.org or (703) 302-1841.