

May 21, 2009

The Honorable Eric Holder
The Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder,

As representatives of the statistical community, we write to urge you to expedite the appointment of a director for the Bureau of Justice Statistics. We would appreciate your giving serious consideration to individuals who have strong management and scientific skills, experience with the federal statistical agencies, familiarity with BJS and an understanding of its products and broader relevance, visibility in the statistical community, an ability to interact effectively with Congress and senior DOJ staff, and an understanding of the National Academies' *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency*.

The fourth edition of the National Academies' *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency* was released this spring and represents years of accumulated wisdom and experience observing, advising, and interacting with the federal statistical agencies. This document lays out the four principles required for an effective statistical program: (1) policy relevance, (2) credibility among data users, (3) trust among data providers, and (4) a strong position of independence. We also encourage you and your staff to review and follow the guidance of this document.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics will play a vital role in the Department of Justice, given this administration's emphasis on evidence-based, data-driven decisionmaking. We believe a director with the above qualities and adherence to the guidance of *Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency* will help BJS better fulfill that role.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sally C. Morton
President
American Statistical Association



Edward J. Spar
Executive Director
Council of Professional Associations on
Federal Statistics

Cc: Laurie Robinson, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs