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February 24, 2020

Katharine T. Sullivan
Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
810 7th St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Deputy Assistant Attorney General Sullivan,

I write to inquire about the release of select Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reports and data. We in the statistical community appreciate the agency's attention to the quality of its data and the current staffing limitations. We also believe the prompt release of such products is necessary to ensure the responsible use of taxpayer funding and to serve their important functions in reducing crime and securing justice. If it would be helpful, the American Statistical Association (ASA) would be pleased to be of assistance.

I focus here on seven awards funding research on rape and sexual assault, as well as victim services. For these projects, amounting to nearly \$17 million, BJS has yet to release the majority of the data and the associated reports, as our accompanying table illustrates.

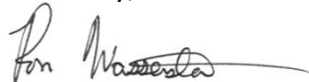
In the first category, BJS has funded three projects totaling \$11.8 million to investigate how to better measure rape and sexual assault incidence rates. The rationale for this work is stated in a [2015 BJS report](#): "BJS estimates of rape and sexual assault from the NCVS have typically been lower than estimates derived from other federal and private surveys." As far as we know, reports or data have not been released as a result of this work that commenced in 2011. Indeed, at the [BJS website on measuring rape and sexual assault](#), the publications and products section lists only work done for a related project to collect data on sexual victimization of undergraduate students on college campuses.

BJS also funded nearly \$5 million for a [study of victim service providers “to fill existing gaps](#) in knowledge and information on the variety of organizations and programs that provide services to victims of crime, the types of victims served and services provided, and staffing and resources available for the provision of services.” As shown in the second section of the attached table, BJS released the report [Victim Service Providers \(VSPs\) in the United States, 2017](#) last fall. However, the one-page summary of the findings reported on only the types of organizations that served victims, their locations, and the rate of VSPs per 100,000 U.S. residents by state. Such information accounts for only a few questions from the first pages of the 10-page questionnaire. The report therefore lacks reporting on the following: the types of services provided (for which there were 12 questions); staffing (seven questions); funding (three questions); record keeping (two questions); and current issues of concern to victim service providers (five questions).

Your [January 15, 2020, letter to leaders in the BJS stakeholder community](#) addressing their [report delay concerns](#) refers to BJS hiring and vacancy recruitment efforts, as well as “considerable time and effort to fix” omissions and inconsistencies. Should delays for the information collections we have identified be associated with insufficient staff availability, I suggest the engagement of the ASA Law and Justice Statistics Committee, which for decades has been serving and supporting BJS. The ASA is also prepared to provide further resources.

Thank you for your consideration. We stand ready to be of assistance to help BJS fulfill its responsibilities to the American taxpayer and the Department of Justice mission.

Sincerely,



Ron Wasserstein

Executive Director

Cc: Members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees
Robert Sivinski, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs/OMB

NB: The staff contact for this letter is ASA Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson:
pierson@amstat.org; 703.302.1841.

BJS Rape and Sexual Assault Information Collection Efforts

| <u>Solicitation/Action</u> | <u>Award Number</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Products</u> |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| BJS FY 11 Methodological Research to Support the NCVS Survey: Self-Report Statistics on Rape and Sexual Assault Pilot Test | 2011-NV-CX-K074 | \$10,071,862 | |
| BJS FY 13 Methodological Research to Support the NCVS: Self-Report Data on Rape and Sexual Assault Pilot Test | 2011-NV-CX-K074 | \$647,738 | |
| BJS FY 15 Methodological Research to Support the National Crime Victimization Survey: Self-Report Data on Rape and Sexual Assault - Pilot Test | 2011-NV-CX-K074 | \$1,051,367 | |
| | TOTAL: | \$11,770,967 | |
| 2011: Charged to National Academies expert panel on Measuring Rape and Sexual Assault in Bureau of Justice Statistics Household Surveys | Charge to Committee | \$1 - 1.5M | Estimating the Incidence of Rape and Sexual Assault (CNSTAT) 2014 |

BJS Victim Services Information Collection Efforts

| <u>Solicitation</u> | <u>Award Number</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Products</u> |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------|---|
| BJS FY 12 National Survey of Victim Service Organizations | 2012-VF-GX-K025 | \$1,999,588 | |
| BJS FY 13 National Survey of Victim Service Organizations Supplement | 2012-VF-GX-K025 | \$192,235 | Victim Service Providers in the United States, 2017 |
| BJS FY 15 National Survey of Victim Service Organizations | 2012-VF-GX-K025 | \$300,000 | |
| FY 2016 National Survey of Victim Service Organizations | 2012-VF-GX-K025 | \$2,408,675 | |
| | TOTAL: | \$4,900,498 | |