



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

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November 4, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chair Murray,

Thank you for the strong support in your FY22 Labor-HHS-Education bill for the US data infrastructure that undergirds our economy, workforce, health, and education. The data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is vital to the health, livelihood, and well-being of families and communities in the United States. We also appreciate the wise investments in the National Institutes of Health and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality that will serve our country's health so well for years to come.

We are especially grateful for the provisions to address the NCES staffing crisis, which impaired its nimbleness and caused it to cut and cut back programs. Your bill's provisions will allow the agency to build in-house capacity and expertise and reduce its over-reliance on contractors, which will result in more timely, reliable, and relevant statistics. Two graphs below illustrate the magnitude of the staffing problem.

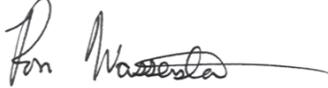
The BLS funding level in your bill will help the agency improve its programs monitoring and reporting our nation's workforce, work conditions, productivity, and inflation. For example, BLS will be able to better track the effect of such advances as the gig economy, AI, robotics, and automation on our economy and workforce. As you know, the BLS has been hit by purchasing power loss over the last decade, as shown below.

For the NCHS, we respectfully ask that the House level of \$190 million be enacted for FY22. The \$15 million increase will be put to immediate and effective use to improve health statistics broadly while providing the agency critical funds to maintain current programs. As you know, NCHS has lost 14 percent in purchasing power since FY10, making it challenging for it to buttress and improve current programs. The figure below illustrates this loss of purchasing power. Our requested level will help NCHS immensely to increase the timeliness and geographical detail of its products and develop new

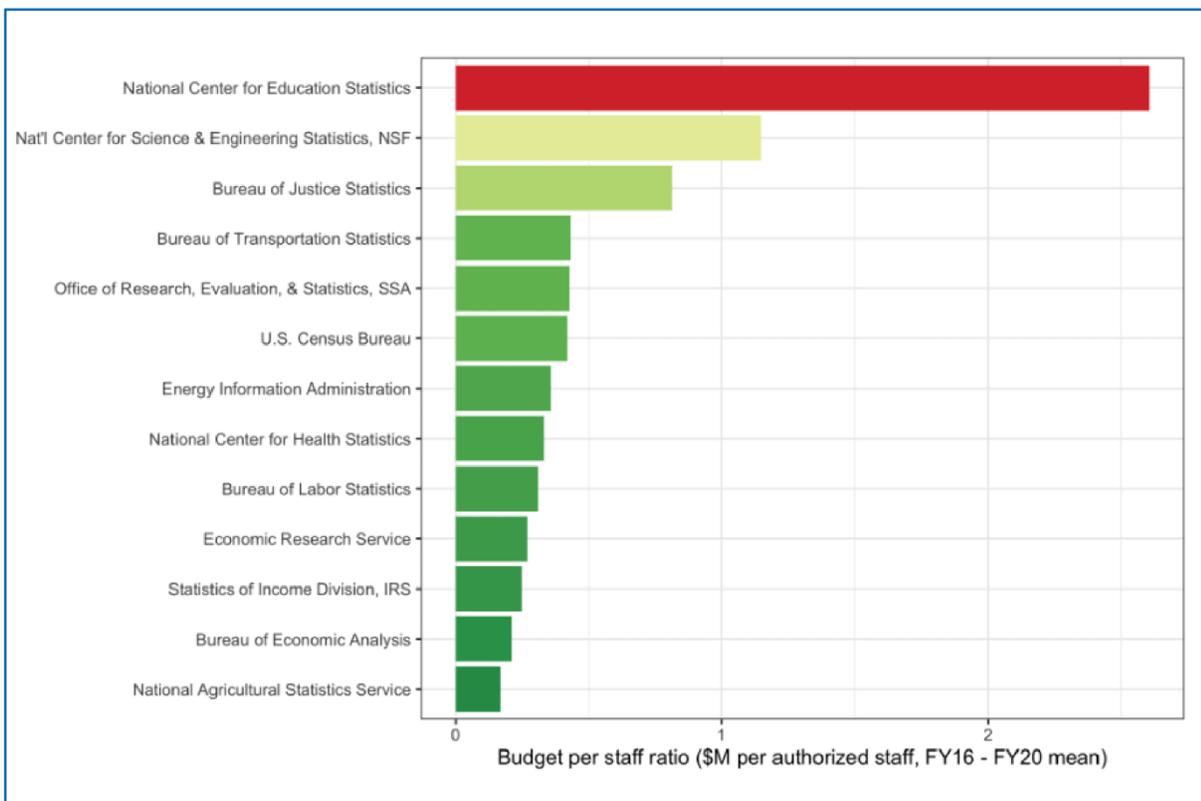
products that will help our country better track—and therefore address issues in—health, health care, and insurance.

We appreciate your leadership and thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,



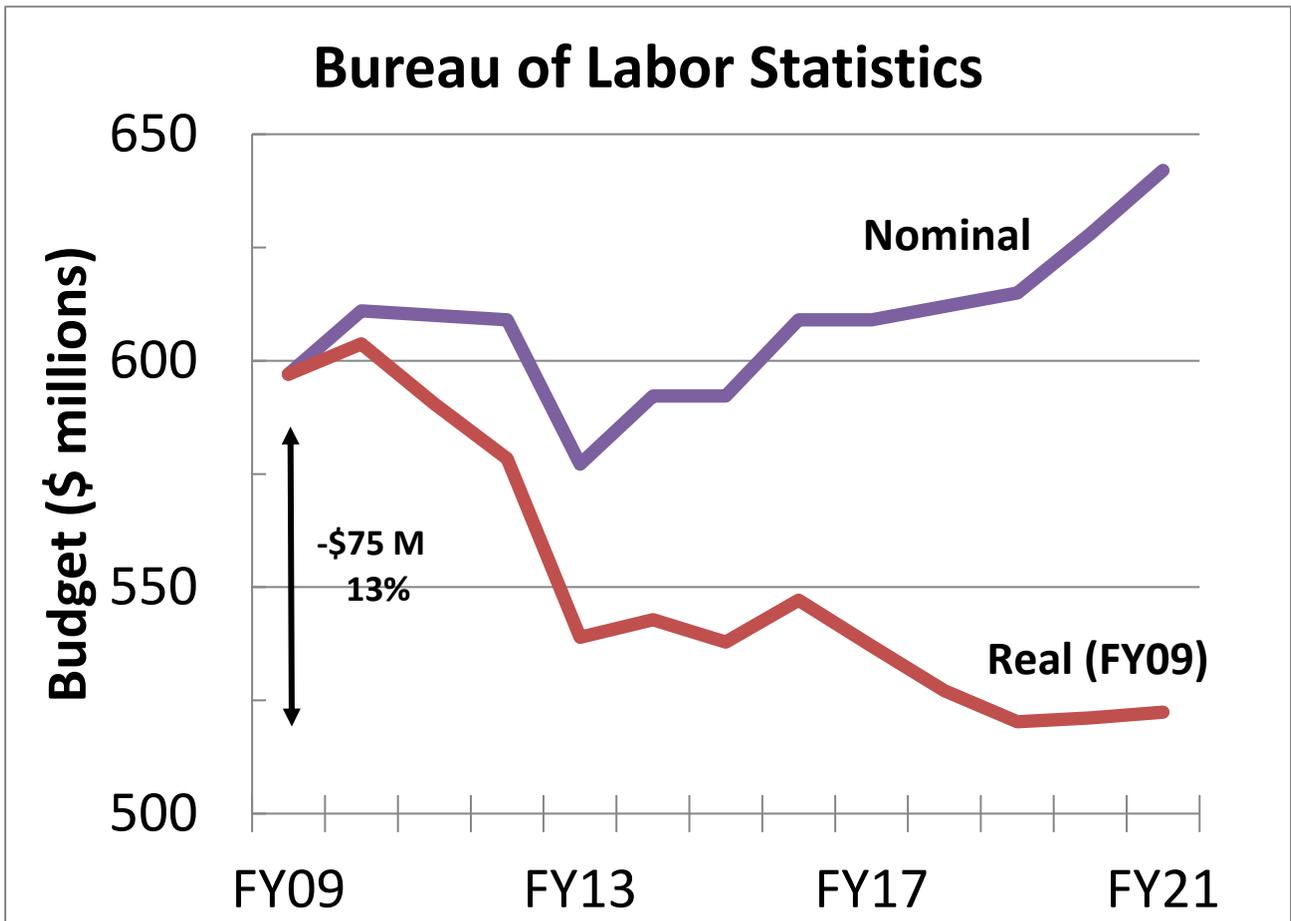
Ron Wasserstein
Executive Director



Schematic demonstrating how much more NCES must rely on contractors than other federal statistical agencies



NCES contractors (FTE) and employees



National Center for Health Statistics

