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Friday's firing of Commissioner of Labor Statistics Erika McEntarfer is calamitous. The firing undermines Americans' trust in federal statistics, with adverse ramifications for the broad swath of decisions that these data inform, affecting all Americans. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) statistics are key inputs to far-reaching public and private policy decisions that have immediate and wide-reaching implications with continuing impacts on the economy.

Further, firing a federal statistics official out of dislike for what official statistics indicate is tantamount to blaming your doctor for your diagnosis. The rigor, checks, and care that go into the production of official statistics are extensive, transparent, long respected, and used across administrations. Presidents may not like the statistics but have respected them.

We have utmost confidence in Commissioner McEntarfer's integrity and qualifications. Indeed, the Senate confirmed McEntarfer to be commissioner in a bipartisan 86-8 vote. We also have confidence in the veracity of the latest job numbers and commend the dedicated, committed, and talented BLS staff who work tirelessly to produce official statistics with commitment to accuracy and objectivity.

The public needs to be able to trust federal statistics, whether they be measures of our economy, crime, health, or the myriad other topics the federal statistical system covers, and to be confident the numbers have not been altered in any way. Public trust in federal statistics helps the administration, Congress, governors and state legislatures, business leaders and others as they work to gain support of their policies.

We also second the Friends of BLS call on Congress "to respond immediately, to investigate the factors that led to Commissioner McEntarfer's removal, to strongly urge the Commissioner's continued service, and ensure that the nonpartisan integrity of the position is retained."

With this firing, the United States is headed down the path taken by Greece and Argentina following their persecution of statistical leaders. That path led to uncertainty in the state of their economies by the world community, which exacerbated their economic challenges. Faltering trust in US economic statistics by the international community and private sector will have untold consequences for the financial health and economic well-being of the nation and the world.

#FederalStatistics #CountOnStatistics #DataInfrastructure