

We're witnessing a quiet crisis that threatens America's economic and societal foundation: the degradation of our federal statistical infrastructure.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics announcement on June 4 illustrates this breakdown. BLS reported having to cut back data collection for its Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is deeply unsettling. The ability to produce accurate, reliable inflation data is paramount for economic stability, monetary policy, and state and federal budgeting. Less reliable data leads to poor business and policy decisions and can even impact family financial planning.

This cut reflects a worrisome trend. So far this year, BLS also announced that it will eliminate about 350 Producer Price Indices, stop publishing CPI regional price data for various types of energy consumption, and suspend access to its restricted data. Last year, BLS stated that, without additional funding, it would need to reduce the sample size for the Current Population Survey, which is the primary data source for the monthly jobs report. Fortunately, Congress provided sufficient funding to maintain the sample size.

BLS is not alone. Due to insufficient budgets and staffing, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Energy Information Administration, the National Agricultural Statistics Service, and other statistical agencies also announced cuts in 2024 that have continued into this year (<https://bit.ly/FedStatMonitoring>).

The challenges facing the federal statistical agencies as well as their needs are documented in *The Nation's Data at Risk*: <https://bit.ly/NationsDataAtRisk>. The Friends of BLS and others have also stressed the need for investment to adapt to the multiple, ongoing challenges so that the federal statistical agencies can continue to produce trusted, quality statistics.

The President's budget request for the coming fiscal year would exacerbate the trends that brought us to the current situation. The economic statistical agencies are already down in staff by 15-20% or more, so we should be talking about rebuilding staff. Instead, the administration proposes further cuts.

Congress is aware of these problems. For example, a February 18 letter signed by 768 individuals and 90 organizations and other efforts highlight the risks and what's at stake: "Unless the current trends – i.e., declines in purchasing power and staff – are reversed, we believe these agencies will have to make further cuts because of the labor intensity of their work, the rising costs of data, and mandatory pay raises." (<https://bit.ly/EconStatsLtr>)

Congress has a clear choice in the FY26 appropriations: reverse these dangerous trends or watch America's statistical infrastructure crumble. To forestall more immediate cuts, the Administration can act now by lifting hiring freezes and approving essential contracts.

Every business decision, every family budget, every policy choice depends on trusted data.  
We cannot afford to let this foundation erode.