

Two missed deadlines in the past week for federal statistics reports raise major red flags about the ability of statistical agencies to fulfill their statutory requirements to produce relevant, timely, credible, accurate, and objective statistics. Without firm intervention from the Office of Management and Budget and a recognition on the part of the administration of its legal responsibilities to enable and support the work of the statistical agencies, the integrity of federal statistics as a whole could be at risk.

First, release of the “Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade: May 2025” report was delayed by several days for potentially problematic reasons. Politico reported that “Trump administration officials delayed and redacted a government forecast because it predicts an increase in the nation’s trade deficit in farm goods later this year.” If true, the redaction or alteration of a federal statistical agency product by an outside official is a serious breach of U.S. law and has the potential to undermine trust in federal statistical products.

“Fundamental Responsibilities of Recognized Statistical Agencies and Units,” the federal regulation issued in accordance with the Evidence Act (which President Trump signed into law in 2019) requires that federal statistical agencies must post a publication schedule for all their products.

The regulation also states that a statistical agency’s home agency “must allow the publication of statistical products without requiring clearance of the content from offices or officials outside of the Recognized Statistical Agency or Unit.”

Laws and regulations requiring posting schedules for statistical products and releasing them on schedule and without outside clearance exist to protect trust and objectivity.

Second, the Condition of Education report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) missed its statutory annual release deadline of June 1. According to the Hechinger Report, the department issued what appeared to be a hurried and incomplete report on June 2.

The missed deadline follows the termination of all but three NCES employees on March 11. In addition, the NCES School Crime and Safety report, originally scheduled for a July release, has been removed from the official publication schedule of the Bureau of Justice Statistics which was involved in collecting data for the report. The fact that NCES has not posted a publication schedule as required by federal regulation is also troubling.

To ensure that federal statistics are objective and the statistical agencies and their products are seen as trustworthy, I call on the administration not to interfere with the collection, analysis, and dissemination of statistical products.

I also call on the administration to enable NCES to fulfill its statutory requirements and serve the needs of America's students, families, and communities, including through restoring essential staff and contracts.