FRIENDS OF BLS

May 7, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
    Health and Human Services and Education
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
    Health and Human Services and Education
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Ranking
    Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
    Health and Human Services and Education
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
    Health and Human Services and Education
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Capito, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Baldwin, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We, the undersigned members of the Friends of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), urge you to sustain and grow investment in the critical evidence provided by the agency by **funding the Bureau with no less than $770 million in FY 2026.**

Thanks to your leadership, BLS received an additional $6 million in FY 2025 to maintain the Current Population Survey sample and begin to modernize its data collection and dissemination capacities. It is our hope that FY 2026 continues to reverse the agency's diminishing purchasing power, which has fallen 22% since FY 2010.

The FY 2025 increase in funding is a positive step towards restoring BLS's capacity to meet consequential national data needs. The requested allocation for FY 2026 represents a significant increase that is necessary to advance critical initiatives such as modernizing existing systems at BLS, examples of which are listed below.

- *Current Population Survey (CPS) Modernization* – The CPS has had a modernization plan in place for the past decade, but it has yet to be implemented. The CPS is a monthly survey of households that provides a comprehensive body of data on the labor force, employment, unemployment, and other labor force characteristics. Established in 1938, the CPS has seen declining response rates in recent years, as have other surveys, and significant funding gaps. The modernization effort is focused on improving response rates, preserving granularity, and reducing bias in the critical data the survey produces as well as significantly reducing costs. These efforts include the development of an internet self-response mode, direct focus on hard-to-reach cases, and adaptive design which will yield cost savings while maintaining data quality. The monthly jobs report relies on these data to deliver accurate local and national estimates of unemployment. We hope the CPS, which is such a critical and high-profile effort, receives the funds it needs to undertake its long overdue modernization.

- *Expand data modernization and data linkage* - Citizens and businesses benefit from blended economic indicators that can be both more timely and more granular. Modern blended statistics are produced by modelling or linking survey data with other sources, such as government or corporate records. Modernizing the way data is collected and processed throughout BLS would lower risks and accommodate the growing preference of employers for electronic reporting. Also, higher quality

research can be conducted securely about which programs work (across many Federal, state, and local agencies) to create jobs and improve economic prosperity.

- *Broaden comprehensiveness of Consumer Expenditure Survey (CEX)*– This initiative includes modernizing collection methods, and expanding coverage of in-kind benefits, home production, and lower income consumers on a quarterly basis. The CEX provides key input to the nation's official measure of inflation, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is used to index Social Security benefits, formulate monetary policy and for many other purposes. Modernization will also provide more robust data to support the Supplemental Poverty measure. Citizens and businesses would benefit from a better understanding of how people respond to changes in prices, especially lower income and working families. BLS has made investments in this project and is ready for deployment of new survey instruments.

We urge that increases in funding for BLS be the start of a sustained effort to take full advantage of advances in data collection and statistical methods that must be the basis for sound decisions about public and private sector investment. To produce the high-quality statistics required for a thriving, 21st century economy, BLS must be a 21st century data agency. It is critical that BLS has the funding to take full advantage of alternative sources of data and apply advanced statistical matching and modelling techniques. Such steps would greatly reduce respondent burden, provide higher frequency granular statistics, provide more return for Congress's investments in the agency, and improve coverage of the economy, especially at state and local levels. The economic landscape can change very quickly. Businesses and policymakers need information on the current economic climate and that requires a current, up-to-date approach to collecting and reporting data.

With your support, BLS can continue to fully support evidence-based policymaking, smart program evaluation, rewarding career choices, and confident business investment. Thank you for your dedicated interest in this critical part of our national data infrastructure and for considering our views as you prepare the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,
Erica L. Groshen, Ph.D.   William W. Beach, D. Phil.

Co-Chair, The Friends of BLS   Co-Chair, The Friends of BLS
BLS Commissioner 2013-2017   BLS Commissioner, 2019-2023

Organizations

American Association for Public Opinion Research

American Statistical Association

Association for Public Policy Analysis ad Management (APPAM)

Association of Population Centers

Association of Public Data Users

BrightQuery

Coleridge Initiative

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Council of Professional Organizations on Federal Statistics

Dotdat LLC

EconAlyze, LLC

EduStrategy Partners

Employ America

ICPSR, the data consortium

Initiative for a Competitive Inner City

NAIOP

National Association for Business Economics

Peace-Work

Population Association of America

SRR Consulting

Vower

Individuals

Lindsey Peterson, Phoenix, AZ

Michael Niemira, Tucson, AZ

Bevin Ashenmiller, Los Angeles, CA

Erik Brynjolfsson, Stanford, CA

George S. Moreno, Newbury Park, CA

Hilary Hoynes, Berkeley, CA

Joel Preisler, Los Angeles, CA

John Rieth, Los Angeles, CA

Katie Windham, Palo Alto, CA

Marianne Bitler, Berkeley, CA

Matthew Unrath, Los Angeles, CA

Michael Reich, Berkeley, CA

Misael Galdámez, Hawthorne, CA

Pete Klenow, Stanford, CA

Richard Holden, Martinez, CA

Sanford M. Jacoby, Los Angeles, CA

Shelly Lundberg, Santa Barbara, CA

Shiang-Ting Yeh, Los Angeles, CA

Spencer Wong, Sacramento, CA

Ryan Gedney, Denver, CO

William, Colorado Springs, CO

Giuseppe Moscarini, Hamden, CT

Joseph G. Altonji, Madison, CT

Orazio Attanasio, New Haven, CT

Aaditya Dar, Washington, DC

Anthony Damico, Washington, DC

Ethan Feilich, Washington, DC

John Schmitt, Washington, DC

Margaret K. O'Hora, Washington, DC

Michael Madowitz, Washington, DC

Sharat Ganapati, Washington, DC

Tara Sinclair, Washington, DC

Michael B. Buso, Ocean View, DE

Gabriel Freund, Doral, FL

Philip L. Rones, The Villages, FL

Clay Collins, Athens, GA

Laura Friesenborg, Forest City, IA

Michael Loebach, Dubuque, IA

Colm O'Muircheartaigh, Chicago, IL

Eliza Forsythe, Champaign, IL

Elizabeth Tipton, Evanston, IL

Evelina Loescher, Northbrook, IL

Mark C. White, Urbana, IL

Tatyana Deryugina, Champaign, IL

Chloe Gibbs, South Bend, IN

Alan Finkelstein Shapiro, Medford, MA

Austin Knipper, Boston, MA

Carol Osler, Framingham, MA

Clifford Cook, Watertown, MA

David Jan, Watertown, MA

Elizabeth Beckett, Boston, MA

Lisa M. Lynch, Newton, MA

Pamela Joshi, Boston, MA

Thomas A. Kochan, Jamaica Plain, MA

Alex Farach, Odenton, MD

Cary Burnell, Takoma Park, MD

Daniel Chow, Rockville, MD

David Michaels, PhD, MPH, Bethesda, MD

Doug Wissoker, Takoma Park, MD

Jennifer C. Boettcher, Laurel, MD

Jeremy Gunderson, Severna Park, MD

Justin Schardin, Silver Spring, MD

Paul Schroeder, Rockville, MD

Robert Podolsky, Rockville, MD

Brad Hershbein, Kalamazoo, MI

Brady T. West, Dexter, MI

David J Corliss, PhD, Plymouth, MI

Jason Ouyang, Troy, MI

Jean Kimmel, Portage, MI

Joseph Casiglia, St Clair Shores, MI

Margaret Levenstein, Ann Arbor, MI

Aaron Sojourner, Minneapolis, MN

Anthony Schaffhauser, Bemidji, MN

Carson Gorecki, Duluth, MN

David R. Senf, St Paul, MN

Evan R. Cunningham, St. Paul, MN

Kari Williams, Minneapolis, MN

Kendra Lewis, St. Paul, MN

Molly Ingram, East Bethel, MN

Mukti Upadhyay, Morris, MN

Stephen V. Burks, Morris, MN

Thomas Durfee, Minneapolis, MN

Donald Planey, Chapel Hill, NC

George Pearkes, Charlotte, NC

Gunnar Blix, Sunapee, NH

Brendan O'Flaherty, Maplewood, NJ

Charles Steindel, Glen Ridge, NJ

Andrew Glen Benson, Ph.D., Albuquerque, NM

Adrian Nesta, Brooklyn, NY

Ben Zupnick, New York, NY

Carlo Sica, New York City, NY

Daniel S. Hamermesh, New York, NY

Daniel Zhao, Brooklyn, NY

John C. Ham, New York, NY

Joseph Carpenter, New York, NY

Leon Silverberg, Port Washington, NY

Lisa Boily, Astoria, NY

Loretta Mason-Williams, PhD, Vestal, NY

Maricar R Mabutas, Brooklyn, NY

Martin Kohli, New York, NY

Michael Grossman, New York, NY

Michelle Schimel, Port Washington, NY

Paul Bennett, New York, NY

Richard Berner, Rye Brook, NY

Sheldon Danziger, New York, NY

Stephanie Schmitt-Grohé, New York, NY

Anne Fitzpatrick, Columbus, OH

Margaret Jodlowski, Columbus, OH

Mark Schweitzer, Cleveland, OH

Susan Helper, Cleveland, OH

Dean Baker, Astoria, OR

Daniel G. Garrett, Philadelphia, PA

Elizabeth Eisenhauer, State College, PA

Mimi L. Perez, Meadville, PA

Roger J Cohen, Lancaster, PA

Lauren Samuels, Nashville, TN

Lee Price, Austin, TX

Stanley W Suchman, Dallas, TX

Susan Mendez, Garland, TX

Ben Zipperer, Harrisonburg, VA

Chuck Coleman, Alexandria, VA

Cynthia Z. F. Clark, Ph.D., McLean, VA

Dixie Sommers, Alexandria, VA

James MacDonald, Arlington, VA

Jane Oates, Arlington, VA

John Bieler, Powhatan, VA

John M Galvin, Alexandria, VA

John M. Meszaros, Midlothian, VA

Kathlen Utgoff, Falls Church, VA

Marshall Reinsdorf, Falls Church, VA

Richard Clayton, Falls church, VA

Sunil Sharma, Reston, VA

Helen Flannery, West Brookfield, VT

Aaron Terrazas, Seattle, WA

Arlene G Cohen, Seattle, WA

Bruce Kochis, Seattle, WA

Christopher Wheeler, Seattle, WA

Madeleine Conrad, Seattle, WA

Mark Rosin, Sequim, WA

Preston Mui, Seattle, WA

Menzie D. Chinn, madison, WI

Timothy M Smeeding, Madison, WI