



# American Statistical Association

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November 18, 2009

Juan Carlos Abril  
Facultad de Ciencias Económicas  
Universidad Nacional de Tucumán  
Casilla de Correo 209,  
4000 San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina

Dear Professor Abril,

I write to commend the efforts of the Sociedad Argentina de Estadística (SAE) to defend the independence of national statistical agencies and to offer the support of the American Statistical Association (ASA).

As ASA president and a member of the U.S. National Academies' Committee on National Statistics, I understand first-hand the importance of your efforts. It is incumbent upon us to educate the public and political leaders about the value of a strong and independent statistical agency and how it is imperative to have these qualities for the agency to produce data the government and public can trust. I believe it is sometimes underappreciated by those in government that a strong and independent statistical agency is in their best interest, especially when proposing or defending policies based on data from these agencies. Should the public believe the data has been politically influenced, they will be less inclined to support the policies.

This spring, the ASA Board endorsed the National Academies' Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency (4th edition, 2009), which lays out four principles necessary for an effective and efficient statistical agency. The principle on independence lists many qualities that help promote independence, including final authority to release statistical information and accompanying materials without prior clearance from other entities; sufficient stature to effectively defend against political interference, advocate for budgets, and speak for the data; and adequate budgets to adapt methodologies to constantly changing environments and to incorporate research advances. I include a copy of this publication for your information.

Thank you for your work. Please let us know how your colleagues at the American Statistical Association can support your important efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sally C. Morton".

Sally C. Morton, PhD  
President, American Statistical Association