



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION
Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

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February 17, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Collins, and Ranking Member Murray,

Because objective, credible federal statistics are essential to our economy, governance, and democracy, I write to respectfully urge you to stipulate in the FY27 appropriations bills that employees of the federal statistical agencies and units be exempted from classification into Schedule Policy/Career. There is both a legal and practical rationale for this request.

Federal statistical agencies are explicitly designed and legally mandated to *inform* policy, not *make* or influence it. The Paperwork Reduction Act and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) both require these agencies to maintain “integrity, objectivity, impartiality” and define their role strictly as providing descriptive statistics and analysis—not policy advocacy or formulation. Classifying these positions as “policy-influencing” contradicts their legal mandates and would undermine the public trust essential to voluntary survey participation; compromise agencies’ ability to fulfill statutory obligations; and place the United States out of compliance with international statistical standards it helped create, formally endorsed, and has historically adhered to.

In fact, in the Evidence Act, the most recent significant congressional legislation in support of the federal statistical system, Congress not only mandates practice consistent with our request, but further directs the Office of Management and Budget and the parent agencies to implement its authorities and responsibilities in a manner that enables, supports, and facilitates Recognized Statistical Agencies and Units in carrying out their fundamental responsibilities. Per OMB’s implementing regulation, that

includes ensuring that “authorities are exercised without regard to any particular political or program impacts.”

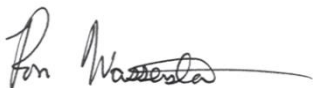
The trustworthiness of federal statistics underpins both evidence-based policymaking across both parties and our nation’s economic credibility. At-will status would create the appearance—or reality—of political control over statistical outputs, with consequences seen in other nations where politicized statistics led to economic crises.

Furthermore, economic studies show that raising economic policy uncertainty, as would happen if some statistical agency employees were treated as policy-influencing, inhibits private sector investment and job creation.^{1,2,3} Moreover, many people outside of government rely on the trustworthiness of federal statistics for decisions related to energy, agricultural crops, education, and building businesses. And, of course, hundreds of billions of dollars are allocated to communities annually based on Census data.

To summarize, I request that FY2027 appropriations bills include language—with consequential enforcement mechanisms—exempting the federal statistical agencies and units designated under 5 U.S.C. § 314 from Schedule Policy/Career classification, preserving the civil service protections essential to their critical and statutory mission of providing objective, nonpartisan data.

Thank you for your consideration. Please direct any questions on this letter to American Statistical Association Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson: spierson@amstat.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Wasserstein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ron Wasserstein, PhD
Executive Director

NB: Identical versions of this letter are being sent to the leadership of the Appropriations Subcommittees on [Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies](#); [Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies](#); [Energy and Water Development](#); [Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies](#); and [Homeland Security](#).

¹ Bloom, Nicholas. 2009. "The impact of uncertainty shocks." *Econometrica* 77, no. 3: 623-685.

² Cascaldi-Garcia, Danilo, Cisl Sarisoy, Juan M. Londono, John Rogers, Deepa Datta, Thiago Ferreira, Olesya Grishchenko, Mohammad R. Jahan-Parvar, Francesca Loria, Sai Ma, Marius Rodriguez, Bo Sun and Ilknur Zer, 2023, "What is certain about uncertainty." *Journal of Economic Literature*.

³ Fernández-Villaverde, Jesús, Pablo Guerrón-Quintana, Juan F. Rubio-Ramirez, and Martin Uribe. 2011. "Risk Matters: The Real Effects of Volatility Shocks." *American Economic Review*. 101 (6): 2530–61.