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PRESS STATEMENT

The Friends of the Bureau of Labor Statistics see new opportunity in the Administration's proposal

Last week, the Administration announced a reorganization of the federal government that would move the Bureau of Labor Statistics from its current place in the Department of Labor to join the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis in the Department of Commerce under the direction of the Undersecretary of Economic Affairs.

These three agencies produce national-level economic and demographic indicators, share data products, and represent the bulk of the spending in our nation's data infrastructure. The administration believes this reorganization would increase cost-effectiveness and improve data quality, while simultaneously reducing respondent burden on businesses and the public.

“Such a reorganization may be the best way to assure that BLS continues to produce gold standard data and achieve the funding necessary to undertake vital modernization efforts such as capacity building, IT improvements, and development of new methods of data collection and dissemination to meet the emerging challenges facing all federal agencies,” said Erica Groshen, chair of the Friends of BLS, and former commissioner of BLS (2013-2017).

However, the Friends of BLS have several key issues they believe will be necessary to address for this reorganization to be successful. Chief among those concerns are assuring that BLS is able to maintain its status as independent Federal Statistical Agency, and that this move advances the federal program of economic and demographic statistics by taking advantage of new opportunities offered by the reorganization, and not just new chances to slash budgets.

In addition, states that currently receive funding from BLS should be protected from any decrease in their resources because of reorganization actions.

The Friends of BLS support improvements to and advancements in our national economic and demographic statistics. We will work with key stakeholders and engage our members to help make sure that organizations, universities, and governments on every level will have input into this process to ensure the continued independence and reliability of data from BLS.

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The Friends of the Bureau of Labor Statistics are a network of individuals and organizations who support the Bureau of Labor Statistics as an institution because of the critical data and tools it provides to a wide variety users.