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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6075

September 23, 2026

The Honorable Kevin Warsh
Chair
Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
20th Street and Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20551

Dear Chair Warsh:

I write today to request information about how the Federal Reserve (the Fed) plans to protect the integrity of the data that it uses to form critical economic decisions amid ongoing concerns about the Department of Commerce (Commerce) politicizing and misusing data, statistics, and reports on the nation's demographics and its economy.

Commerce's decision to remove the ban on political interference in its scientific integrity policy¹ threatens the accuracy and reliability of statistics collected and produced by its agencies, including the Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), which produce data upon which the Fed relies to analyze the economy, set interest rates, and execute its dual mandate of promoting maximum employment and stable prices. The Fed has an obligation to the American public to both ensure its policymaking rests on objective data and to be transparent about how it is meeting that obligation.

On August 19, 2026, Commerce's Office of Privacy and Open Government (OPOG) quietly issued a directive that opens the door for political interference in its scientific reports and activities.² Specifically, the updated policy eliminated commitments to protect against data "suppres[ion] [delay], or alter[ation]" and it omits "independent review of facilities, methodologies, and other scientific activities as appropriate to ensure scientific integrity."³ Just as previous versions did, the revised policy applies to Commerce and its agencies, including the Census Bureaus and the BEA, both of which produce key data used by the Fed for economic analyses.⁴ BEA produces GDP and the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index, the Fed's preferred inflation gauge, while

¹ NPR, "Trump officials cut political interference ban after unusual Census Bureau report," Hansi Lo Wang, August 31, 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/08/31/nx-s1-5948057/department-commerce-census-bureau-scientific-integrity>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*; U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Privacy and Open Government, Policy Directive on Scientific Integrity, January 15, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20260117134635/https://www.commerce.gov/opog/directives/DAO_216-23.

⁴ NPR, "Trump officials cut political interference ban after unusual Census Bureau report," Hansi Lo Wang, August 31, 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/08/31/nx-s1-5948057/department-commerce-census-bureau-scientific-integrity>.

Census provides data on population and demographics used to assess and contextualize economic trends.⁵

The revised policy was issued only one day after the Census Bureau published a “highly unusual”⁶ report making unsubstantiated claims about noncitizen voting in the 2020 election and a few weeks before the Trump Administration proposed to “stop using the census to ask about people’s race and ethnicity, a topic that the national tally has included since the first count in 1790.”⁷ That and other proposed changes would have sweeping implications for the quality of our economic data, the redistricting process that determines congressional representation, the Federal Reserve’s monetary policy decisions that rely upon key BEA inflation data, and our ability to enforce civil rights and other laws.⁸

These developments follow a string of other attacks against the United States’ statistical system:

- In March 2025, the Administration terminated key advisory committees at BEA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) that employed external experts who were tasked with recommending ways to improve and modernize economic data.⁹
- In August 2025, President Trump fired BLS Commissioner, Dr. Erika McEntarfer, based on false claims that she “rigged” employment data “in order to make Republicans, and [Trump], look bad.”¹⁰
- By October 2025, amid Trump’s government shutdown, the BLS canceled the release of its full monthly jobs report for the first time in the agency’s history.¹¹
- On June 24, 2026, BEA announced changes to how several components of the PCE price index are calculated, which economists predict will likely lower recent inflation readings.¹² The “opacity regarding [the changes] has raised some eyebrows” and came as “economists and investors are on high alert for any sign of political interference in economic data from President Trump or his appointees.”¹³

⁵ Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, “What Is PCE? Explaining the Fed’s Preferred Inflation Measure,” David Pendered, May 20, 2026, <https://www.atlantafed.org/what-we-study/inflation/2026/05/20/what-is-pce-explaining-the-feds-preferred-inflation-measure>; U.S. Census Bureau, “Our Censuses,” <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/censuses.html>.

⁶ CNN, “Experts slam Trump’s unusual new census report as a ‘hijack by the White House,’” Gabe Cohen and Fredreka Schouten, August 20, 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/08/20/politics/flawed-census-report-alleged-noncitizen-voting>.

⁷ NPR, “Trump officials propose sweeping changes to the census that would reshape voting maps,” Hansi Lo Wang, September 10, 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/09/09/nx-s1-5845147/trump-us-census-citizenship-question-race-categories>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Politico, “‘Bad sign’: Purge of data experts raises alarms over economic reports,” Sam Sutton, March 21, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/03/21/labor-commerce-department-economy-data-doge-00241559>.

¹⁰ AP News, “Trump removes official overseeing jobs data after dismal employment report,” Christopher Rugaber and Josh Boak, August 1, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-jobs-firing-f00e9bf96d0110519be9bf4f3ec89195>; Truth Social Post by President Donald J. Trump, @realDonaldTrump, August 1, 2025, <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114954846612623858>.

¹¹ CNBC, “White House says October jobs and inflation data may never be released because of the shutdown,” Jeff Cox, November 12, 2025, <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/11/12/white-house-october-data-release.html>.

¹² Reuters, “Methodology changes could lower US May core PCE inflation, economists say,” June 29, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/methodology-changes-could-lower-us-may-core-pce-inflation-economists-say-2026-06-29/>.

- Also in June 2026, Commerce announced changes to data confidentiality when it barred the use of “noise infusion,” a common method that statistical agencies use to publish local demographic and industry data that does not reveal the confidential information of individual persons or businesses.¹⁴ The decision to bar noise infusion data was seemingly made without the consultation of career staff or scientific experts, and experts have noted that the move may undermine the accuracy of certain data, and “spell the end of a wide swath of data from the Census Bureau, including key statistics used for redistricting, policymaking and research.”¹⁵ The decision also led Census to delay release of its annual American Community Survey—data critical to policymakers at the Fed, nonprofits, and the private sector, and that underpin analyses, planning, investment decisions, and funding for public services.¹⁶

The Fed’s ability to make decisions on interest rates independent of the White House depends on the reliability of the data it uses to set policy. The Fed has a responsibility to ensure its data sources are reliable and to explain to the public what safeguards, if any, it has in place to verify the integrity of its data sources, including the BEA and Census. To better understand how the Fed is responding to these developments, I request detailed answers to the following questions by no later than October 7, 2026:

1. Are there existing protocols in place at the Fed to ensure data from external sources — including BEA and Census — are accurate and free from political interference? If so, what are they? If not, why not?
2. To what extent will the ability of the Fed to meet its dual mandate be limited if it is unable to obtain accurate data on demographics and the state of the economy?
3. Is the political independence of the Federal Statistical Agencies an important component of the utility of the data that they produce?
4. Describe how the Fed will meet its dual mandate if the Trump Administration limits the independence of the Federal Statistical Agencies.
5. Describe how the Fed will meet its dual mandate if the economic data provided by Federal Statistical Agencies becomes subject to political interference.

¹³ Wall Street Journal, “A Statistical Revamp Is About to Lower Inflation, at a Critical Time,” Matt Grossman, July 19, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/economy/central-banking/pce-inflation-data-updates-ca7bfd61>.

¹⁴ Department of Commerce, Office of Privacy and Open Government, “Disclosure Avoidance for Statistical Products,” June 4, 2026, <https://www.commerce.gov/opog/disclosure-avoidance-statistical-products>.

¹⁵ Dataindex.us, “A New Commerce Policy Could Mean Less Public Data, Not Better Public Data,” Christopher Steven Marcum, Meghan Maury, and Beth Jarosz, June 11, 2026, <https://dataindex.us/newsletter/article/5ed3272e-9a35-4f38-881b-c62ad45d6a56>; NPR, “A Trump push to cut ‘statistical noise’ could mean less data from the Census Bureau,” Hansi Lo Wang, June 12, 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/06/12/nx-s1-5855734/census-bureau-data-differential-privacy>.

¹⁶ Peterson Institute for International Economics, “Political meddling at the Census Bureau damages the entire US statistical system,” Jed Kolko, September 1, 2026, <https://www.piie.com/blogs/realtime-economics/2026/political-meddling-census-bureau-damages-entire-us-statistical-system>; Letter from League of Women Voters to Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, September 4, 2026, <https://www.lwv.org/lwvus-joins-letter-urging-release-acs-data>.

6. In June 2026, you announced a new task force on data for advancing monetary policy.¹⁷ Will the task force commit to considering the above questions and make recommendations on how the Fed can ensure that its data sources are free from political interference? If not, why not?

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs

¹⁷ Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, “Chairman’s Task Forces for Advancing Monetary Policy,” July 9, 2026, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/task-forces.htm>.