DATE: October 19, 2026

TO: Howard Lutnick, Secretary of Commerce, U.S. Department of Commerce

RE: Request to Reconsider Specific Revisions to the Department of Commerce Scientific Integrity Policy (DAO 216-23)

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

The undersigned organizations and individuals, representing a broad coalition of scientific, statistical, and professional communities dedicated to the integrity of federal data, write to express our concern regarding recent updates to the U.S. Department of Commerce Scientific Integrity Policy (DAO 216-23). Specifically, we urge the Department to restore language:

1. Prohibiting political interference or inappropriate influence in the collection, analysis and dissemination of federal data.
2. Providing explicit whistle-blower protections for people who report scientific integrity concerns.

American businesses, institutions and organizations rely on objective, evidence-based data produced by the Department's principal statistical and scientific bodies, including the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Eliminating unambiguous language designed to protect government science from political manipulation significantly compromises the institutional safeguards that sustain Americans' trust and reliance upon our national data infrastructure.

Our collective concerns focus on two critical threats to federal data:

1. **Erosion of Public and Professional Trust:** Federal economic and demographic indicators drive billions of dollars in public and private investments. By removing explicit firewalls against political pressure and inappropriate influence, the revised departmental policy would substantially undermine the credibility of the data which will be difficult to reclaim.
2. **Vulnerability of Career Scientists:** Clear, enforceable rules against political interference and inappropriate influence provide necessary professional protection for federal researchers and statisticians, ensuring that the data products they compile and release to the public adhere to well-established and widely accepted scientific standards and have not been judgmentally altered or skewed with political considerations in mind. Removing this language leaves agency experts vulnerable to external ideological pressures and could compromise objective analysis or distort scientific communication to the American public.

We strongly urge the Department of Commerce to restore the explicit language in its scientific integrity policy prohibiting political interference or inappropriate influence and providing whistleblower protections. Our organizations stand ready to work with your office to ensure that federal statistics remain a non-partisan pillar of governance, rooted in transparency and robust scientific standards.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Organizations

AEA Committee on Government Relations

American Association for Public Opinion Research

American Economic Association Committee on Economic Statistics

American Educational Research Association

American Sociological Association

American Statistical Association

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)

Association of Population Centers

Association of Public Data Users

Council of Professional Organizations on Federal Statistics

Data Rescue Project

Decision Demographics, LLC

Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)

National Association for Business Economics

National Council on Measurement in Education

Nielsen

Obelisk Tech Systems Inc.

Population Association of America

Population Reference Bureau

The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

Individuals

Joelle Abramowitz, Ann Arbor, MI
Nancy Bates, Washington, DC
Misha Belkindas, Rockville, MD
David Cantor, Derwood, MD
Deborah Carr, Providence, RI
Carol S. Carson, Durham, NC
Constance Citro, Washington, DC
Susan Clapp, Chicago, IL
Cynthia Z F Clark, Lexington, VA
Michael P. Cohen, Fairfax, VA
Carol Corrado, Ph.D, Washington, DC
Rachel Cortes, San Antonio, TX
Brittany Creel, Chicago, IL
Doug Currivan, Apex, NC
John L. Czajka, Bethesda, MD
Cole Donovan, Gambrills, MD
David Dutwin, Chesterton, IN
Sophia Gomez, California
Robert J Hanisch, Alexandria, VA
Brad Hershbein, Kalamazoo, MI
Ken Hodges, Ithaca, NY
Travis Hoppe, Washington, DC
David Iaia, Alexandria, VA
Daniel Kasprzyk, Chevy Chase, MD
Lynda Kellam, Philadelphia, PA
Arthur B. Kennickell, Washington, DC
Matthew Kodis, Des Moines, IA
Alfonso Flores-Lagunes, Kalamazoo, MI
John H.Laub, Denver, CO
Thomas Louis, Kensington MD
Terri Ann Lowenthal, Stamford, CT
Dr. Julia Manzella, Alexandria, VA
Christopher Steven Marcum, Gaithersburg, MD
David Marker, Fulton, MD
Thomas L. Mesenbourg, Jr, Cochranville, PA
Peter Miller, Evanston, IL
Kelly Musick, Ithaca, NY
Kathryn O'Neill, Philadelphia, PA
Mark C Otto, Florence, CO
Hannah Person, Baltimore, MD
Stanley Presser, Washington, DC
Barbara J Robles, PhD, Silver Spring, MD
Margaret R Roller, Foster, VA
Noam Ross, Brooklyn, NY
Joseph Salvo, Bronx, NY
Alexis R. Santos, State College, PA
Paul Schroeder, Rockville, MD
Jim Schwartz, Teaneck, NJ
Robert Seamans, New York, NY
Rachel Seeger, Kensington, MD
Tara Sinclair, Washington, DC
Aaron Sojourner, Minneapolis, MN
Sarah Spell, Silver Spring, MD
Martha A. Starr, Falls Church, VA
Scott Swinton, Portland, OR
Michele Ver Ploeg, Washington, DC
James Wagner, Ann Arbor, MI
William Weaver, Shaker Heights, OH
Andy Weiss, Michigan
Brady T. West, Dexter, MI
Adeline Wilcox, Beltsville, MD
Oliver Wise, Takoma Park, MD
Jaclyn Wong, Berkeley, CA
James P Ziliak, Lexington, KY