

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 27, 2024

The Honorable Julie Su
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210

Acting Secretary Su,

Given the numerous downward jobs revisions published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) over the last two years, we are seeking information regarding the BLS's methodology in estimating job numbers in addition to why the BLS has failed to accurately assess changes in labor participation. For example, in recent months, the American people have witnessed a monthly 97,000 downward revision for January 2024,¹ a 300,000 total downward revision as part of the BLS's annual 2023 benchmark review,² and, most recently, an 818,000 total downward revision for jobs created in the 12-month period through March 2024.³ This revision to the 2024 benchmark review is 28 percent lower than the original BLS estimate of 2.9 million jobs created,⁴ the second worst revision in U.S. history, and one of many data points accentuating the harm that Bidenomics has brought to the American people.

These discrepancies, representing jobs that the Biden-Harris Administration claimed to have created, which simply do not exist, were reported as signs of economic dynamism and positive job creation. There were multiple instances over the last year in which news outlets reported that the job market was "strong,"⁵ "red-hot,"⁶ or "sizzling,"⁷ to name a few. News outlets took initial BLS data at face value, concluding that the job market was strong.

¹ "Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Revisions between over-the-Month Estimates, 1979-Present," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed August 23, 2024, <https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cesnaicsrev.htm#2024>.

² "2023 Preliminary Benchmark Revision," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 23, 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/ces/notices/2023/2023-preliminary-benchmark-revision.htm>.

³ Jeff Cox, "Nonfarm Payroll Growth Revised down by 818,000, Labor Department Says," CNBC, August 21, 2024, <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/08/21/nonfarm-payroll-growth-revised-down-by-818000-labor-department-says.html#:~:text=The%20revision%20to%20the%20total,358%2C000%20less%20than%20initially%20reported.>

⁴ Doug Cunningham, "Estimates of Annual U.S. Job Growth Cut by 818,000 to 2.1 Million," UPI, August 21, 2024, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2024/08/21/BLS-jobs-estimate-revised-downward/4331724254880/.

⁵ Lucia Mutikani, "US Labor Market Defies Rate Hikes, Posts Strong Job Gains | Reuters," Reuters, May 5, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/us/slower-us-job-growth-expected-april-unemployment-rate-seen-rising-36-2023-05-05/>.

⁶ Alicia Wallace et al., "Markets End the Week Lower after Red-Hot Jobs Report | CNN Business," CNN, January 5, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/business/live-news/markets-jobs-report-december-010523/index.html>.

⁷ Scott Horsley, "Amazingly, the U.S. Job Market Continues to Roar. Here Are the 5 Things to Know," NPR, June 3, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/03/1179652353/jobs-labor-market-unemployment-economy-workers>.

Additionally, Chair Jerome Powell and the Federal Reserve have long claimed to be “data dependent”⁸ in their decisions to set monetary policy, and monthly jobs numbers undoubtedly factor into interest rate decisions. Yet, with such consistent downward revisions, BLS data and actual job market growth clearly failed to match up with the rosy estimates painted by the Biden-Harris Administration.⁹

These misleading numbers create a false impression for the public and cast doubt on the validity of the Bureau’s accuracy and legitimacy. Had news reporters and outlets received the revised job numbers first each month, reporting and public perception of the job market may have changed. Given the woeful record of the Bureau over the last two years, it is time for the BLS to accurately assess labor participation at the outset and admit the fact that the number of full-time employed Americans decreased by 510,000 from July 2023 to July 2024.¹⁰

As we approach the presidential election in 70 days, the state of the economy is one of the major issues on American’s minds.¹¹ There should be no confusion when it comes to evaluating the health of our economy. Regularly publishing rosy job estimates that do not represent reality is blatantly dishonest and misleads the American people, contributing to the fact that less than 25 percent of Americans trust their government to do what is right most of the time.¹² The Biden-Harris Administration’s policies have crippled the American working class. Instead of honestly reporting the record, these preliminarily job numbers represent the Administration’s desire to claim economic success when Americans are struggling to afford basic necessities.¹³

To that end, we demand that you provide answers in writing to the following questions:

1. Why has BLS repeatedly revised downward its monthly job estimates over the last two years?
2. Why has BLS repeatedly revised downward its annual benchmark revision for each of the last two years?
3. Of the jobs created under the Biden-Harris Administration, how many were simply recouped from the COVID-19 pandemic job losses?
4. Of new jobs added that were not recouped from the COVID-19 pandemic, what percentage were full-time jobs versus part-time jobs?

⁸ Jerome Powell, “Data-Dependent Monetary Policy in an Evolving Economy,” Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, October 8, 2019, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/powell20191008a.htm>.

⁹ Josephine Rozzelle, “Biden Touts ‘great American Comeback’ after Better-than-Expected May Jobs Report,” CNBC, June 7, 2024, <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/06/07/biden-cheers-may-jobs-report-slams-congressional-gop-economic-plan.html>.

¹⁰ “Employed, Usually Work Full Time,” FRED, August 2, 2024, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LNS12500000>.

¹¹ Gallup, “Most Important Problem,” Gallup.com, August 2, 2024, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1675/most-important-problem.aspx>.

¹² “Public Trust in Government: 1958-2024,” Pew Research Center, June 24, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/06/24/public-trust-in-government-1958-2024/>.

¹³ Aimee Picchi, “Americans Need an Extra \$11,400 Today Just to Afford the Basics, Republican Analysis Finds,” CBS News, November 30, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/inflation-households-need-extra-11400-these-states-its-even-higher/>.

5. Of new jobs added that were not recouped from the COVID-19 pandemic, what percentage are jobs within the federal government?
6. What percentage of new jobs in 2024 have been full-time rather than part-time?
7. What percentage of the revised job numbers are going to foreign workers?
8. What in the BLS's methodology is malfunctioning so badly that it must revise its job numbers downward by almost a million jobs?
9. Are there any protections in place guarding these important statistics against influence from presidential administrations that have an interest in having their BLS report favorable job outcomes?

In November, the American people will have a choice to continue the failed policies of the Biden-Harris Administration or pursue a pro-worker agenda which will not need to be revised down to show how bad conditions have truly become. We request a response to this letter by September 9, 2024. It is imperative that the American people receive a fair and accurate accounting of the nation's economic health.

Sincerely,



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Markwayne Mullin
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CC:

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