

United States Senate

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Erika L. McEntarfer
Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics
United States Department of Labor
Postal Square Building
Two Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20212

Dear Commissioner McEntarfer:

I write to you today regarding serious concerns about the employment data your agency publishes on behalf of the American people. As you know, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently released significant data revisions for nonfarm payroll jobs created between April 2023 and March 2024, revising its figures downward by an astonishing 810,000 fewer jobs.¹ Further job revisions were also reported for June and July of this year, revealing that 113,000 fewer full-time jobs were created this summer.²

So far, job gains have been revised downward for five of six months in 2024 for a total of 340,000 fewer jobs created than initially reported.³ Similarly, job gains were revised downward for 11 of 12 months in 2023, by a monthly average of 30,000 fewer jobs, totaling 360,000 fewer jobs than initially reported last year.⁴ These substantial and continual reporting errors certainly do not inspire confidence.

More distressing than these sizable revisions are recent comments by the leader of the United States central bank, Chairman Jay Powell of the Federal Reserve and Federal Open Market Committee, who stated on September 18th that other data they have reviewed “suggests the payroll report numbers that we’re getting may be artificially high and will be revised down” and that the Federal Reserve is mentally adjusting for that fact in its decision making to determine monetary policy and the

¹ CNN, “New data shows US job growth has been far weaker than initially reported,” August 21, 2024.

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/08/21/economy/bls-jobs-revisions/index.html>

² Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Revisions between over-the-month estimates, 2024, BLS.

<https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cesnaicsrev.htm#2024>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Revisions between over-the-month estimates, 2023, BLS.

<https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cesnaicsrev.htm#2023>

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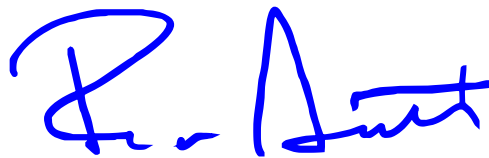
federal fund target rate.⁵ That is terrifying.

The official data BLS publishes is relied upon by millions of people trying to make the best decisions for their businesses, families, and their futures. Therefore, I am writing to ask you the following important questions:

- How reliable are the initial monthly employment estimates compared to the revised figures?
- How does the BLS reconcile differences between the establishment survey (CES) and household survey (Current Population Survey) employment estimates?
- How do the recent revisions affect our understanding of employment trends over the past year?
- How do you respond to the fact that the Federal Reserve seems to distrust, and has to mentally adjust for, the data your agency publishes on the United States labor force?

Answers to these pressing questions will help us better understand how we should interpret the federal government's official employment data estimates so we can make the best decisions on behalf of American families and taxpayers. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator

⁵ FOMC Press Conference, September 18, 2024. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/videos.htm>