

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

April 17, 2014

The Honorable John H. Thompson
Director
U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Director Thompson:

We are concerned about reports of changes to the Current Population Survey that could prevent Congress and the American people from knowing the impact of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

On April 15, 2014, *The New York Times* reported that your agency "is changing its annual survey so thoroughly that it will be difficult to measure the effects of President Obama's health care law in the next report." Congress and the American people count on the Census Bureau to provide an accurate report of the law's impact on health insurance coverage, so it is alarming that the administration appears to be altering survey questions in a way that will obscure the law's impact. We are deeply troubled by this and the American people should be too.

We respectfully request that you continue to collect data using both the old and new survey questions for this year and next year. Of course we always want the best statistical information, but the collection of only one year of comparable data is insufficient. Continuing to collect data using both the old and new survey questions will help ensure that you do not conflate a change in measurement with changes due to implementation of the new health care law.

Further, to avoid the appearance of impropriety and the seeming intent to manipulate data, we request answers to the following questions which will aid Congress in its oversight of these changes.

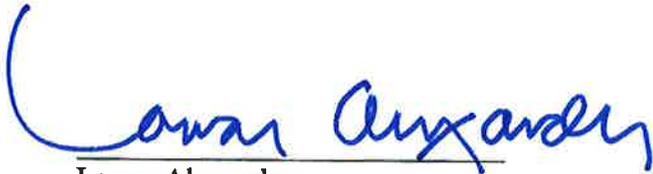
- 1) Did your agency receive public comments expressing concerns related to the new survey questions?
- 2) Did your agency take into account the comments that were received, and what changes if any were made as a result of the public comments you received?
- 3) Is one year of comparable data sufficient to provide a baseline to evaluate the impact of a new law?

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- 4) Will the collection of data using both the old and new survey questions help to produce a more accurate baseline?
- 5) What role did the White House, the White House Council of Economic Advisers, the White House Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor have in your decision to implement the new survey questions? Please provide all documents and communications related to changes to the annual survey with these parties, or any other federal agencies.
- 6) Please provide all documents and communications related to the potential impact of the proposed changes in data collection on the number of insured or uninsured that would be reported in the study.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and we look forward to your reply in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
U.S. Senate



John Thune
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
U.S. Senate



Orrin G. Hatch
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate