#### Protections are key to check against retaliation.

Andrea Hsu 25. "Trump loves saying 'You're fired.' Now he's making it easier to fire federal workers." National Public Radio. 6-23-2025. npr.org/2025/06/23/nx-s1-5431871/federal-employees-fired-hiring-trump-civil-service

Now, under the administration's proposed rule, federal employees in jobs deemed "policy-influencing" could lose those protections all together.

"There wouldn't need to be any reason given for just firing people," says Stacey Young, who worked at the Justice Department for 18 years before resigning in late January.

Young says if federal employees can be removed based on political whim, the American people will suffer. Gone would be the protections that enable "brilliant, qualified people" to spend their entire careers helping the American public, she says.

Concern for the government's number crunchers

Even in corners of the government that appear farthest from politics, there are concerns about the changes Trump is bringing to the civil service.

Erica Groshen, who served as commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics back in the Obama administration, affectionately calls the economists, statisticians and others who track employment, inflation, wages and other economic indicators "the best data nerds around."

Even though they spend their days crunching numbers, she worries they too could be among those turned into at-will employees.

She can't figure out what the administration means when it says it plans to reclassify people in "policy-influencing" positions.

"It is not specific. Many of these words are open to interpretation," says Groshen. "Does BLS influence policy? Yes, it's intended to."

The Federal Reserve uses its data when choosing to raise or lower interest rates. Retirees' Social Security benefits are adjusted based on the consumer price index. A mistake of a tenth of a percentage point could result in overpayments or underpayments of a billion dollars, Groshen says.

Outside the government, businesses write long-term contracts tied to the government's inflation data and decide where to set up production facilities based on wages and workforce availability.

Underlying all of this, Groshen says, is a shared trust that the people collecting, processing and reporting the data are doing it free from political interference. Even the perception that government data could be manipulated by politics could change that.

"The trustworthiness of the information would be lost," Groshen says, with huge implications for an economy that needs reliable data to stay on track.

#### Slow growth and rate hikes are inevitable absent the civil service.

Michael Strain 25. Director of Economic Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, Ph.D. in economics from Cornell University. "Trump Must Appoint a Nonpartisan Statistics Chief." Project Syndicate. 8/6/2025. project-syndicate.org/commentary/trump-must-not-install-lackey-as-bureau-labor-statistics-commissioner-by-michael-r-strain-2025-08

By incorrectly asserting that the jobs data are biased, Trump is undermining the credibility of the information on which policymakers, businesses, households, and investors depend. The economic implications are far-reaching. Without a good sense of the economic facts on the ground, investors may perceive risk levels to be higher, businesses might delay new projects, and the US Federal Reserve could make a costly mistake in setting interest rates.

Trump’s decision to fire McEntarfer and appoint a new BLS commissioner has a historical resonance that is hard to ignore. The Soviet Union and China regularly falsified economic data to buttress their policies. (Joseph Stalin executed the census official who found that the Soviet Union had a smaller population than Stalin had announced).

It cannot be stated often enough that the data produced by the BLS about the labor market – and US government economic data more broadly – are the gold standard. There is simply no substitute for it. While private-sector data are an important compliment to official statistics, they are often benchmarked against government data and are not nearly as representative nor as authoritative.

Likewise, revisions to official statistics – the trigger for McEntarfer’s firing – are routine and not a cause for concern. Government agencies must balance the need for high-quality data with the imperative of timely reporting.

The jobs figures are an estimate of the total number of payroll employees during the week that includes the 12th day of the month. Companies are surveyed, but some send in their responses late, while others pay their workers monthly, at the end of the month. The challenge for the BLS is to provide decision-makers with vital information as quickly as it can, while knowing that the longer it waits, the higher the quality of its data will be.

For example, the BLS could have waited until August to report data for May, but that would have made it hard for the Federal Reserve to set interest rates over the summer and for businesses to make important decisions that rely on the state of the labor market. So, instead, BLS releases an estimate for May in June, and then another based on more complete data in July, before it reports a final figure in August.

In addition to survey response issues, the BLS must contend with the challenge of estimating the reduction in employment from firms that exited the market in May, and the number of net new jobs in firms that were created in May. It must also account for seasonal fluctuations in employment.

The upshot is that revisions are just that – revisions, not corrections.

Moreover, while last week’s revisions were large, with May’s employment total revised down by 125,000 jobs and June’s by 133,000 jobs, they did not strike me as worrisome or excessive. According to my calculations, over the past three decades there were ten instances of downward revisions larger than 100,000 jobs and 26 instances of upward revisions of more than 100,000 jobs.

Trump should think twice before attempting to install a lackey at the BLS. He would be wise to remember that when Argentina manipulated its inflation data – and markets stopped trusting official statistics – interest rates increased and the country’s debt crisis worsened.

Still, even if Trump installs a yes-man as commissioner, we should continue to believe in the integrity of the data – which are extremely hard to rig – until the agency’s civil servants give us reason not to.

McEntarfer made decisions at the BLS free from political influence. The agency’s next leader should be just as independent. If not, policymakers, business leaders, households, and investors may begin to perceive government data as flawed, which can have damaging and cascading effects throughout the US economy. It is in Trump’s direct political interest to avoid this. But given his history of scoring own goals, I am worried.