

April 5, 2012

Memorandum for: The Record

From: Steven Haugen
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Subject: Changes to the May 2012 Current Population Survey (CPS) Disability Supplement Questionnaire

The Office of Management and Budget contacted the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on March 28, 2012 with a request for substantive changes to the May 2012 Disability Supplement questionnaire. OMB expressed concerns that several of the supplement questions would not elicit the types of information sought by the supplement sponsor, The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The most significant change requested was that all of the response categories for barriers to employment should be presented to the respondent, rather than asking for a main barrier. Consultations between BLS, ODEP, and the Census Bureau (the agency that conducts the CPS for BLS), were held on March 29 and March 30 to evaluate the need for and feasibility of making the requested changes. BLS and the Census Bureau expressed concerns about the risks to data collection that would result from making changes to the questionnaire late in the production process. A follow-up meeting between BLS, ODEP, and OMB was held on March 30, 2012. ODEP and OMB were apprised of the data collection risks at this meeting, but both agencies determined that the OMB-requested changes were important in helping ODEP satisfy the stated goals of the supplement, as outlined in the information collection request (ICR) published in the Federal Register. Additional follow-up conversations between BLS, ODEP, OMB, and the Census Bureau were held April 2-3 to finalize the suggested changes. As a result, BLS formally asked that the Census Bureau make the OMB-requested changes to questions 3, 4, 5 and 16 of the May 2012 CPS Disability Supplement questionnaire on April 3, 2012.