Top Issues/Opportunities Facing the Federal Statistical System in Congress

1. Concerns over the American Community Survey
   - House Provision to make ACS voluntary (unlikely Senate will agree to this provision)
   - House and Senate bills to make ACS voluntary: neither has been taken up committee though was briefly on House Committee docket this spring
   - Ongoing threat:
     - House voted to eliminate ACS altogether in 2012
     - could be impacted by change in Senate leadership in next Congress

2. Autonomy/Stature Issues for National Center of Education Statistics and Bureau of Transportation Statistics
   - House-passed bill removes presidential appointment of NCES Commissioner and transfers NCES authority on publications and budget to parent organization Institute of Education Science (IES)
     - Original 2002 bill creating IES undermined some NCES autonomy
     - 2012 law removed Senate confirmation of NCES Commissioner
   - BTS doesn’t have authority over its publications, budget, or IT. Was moved to office of the Secretary of Transportation in the last year, making such BTS autonomy/authority all the more important

3. Data Synchronization
   - Senate bill would allow limited sharing of IRS business data with BEA and BLS, which in turn would improve statistical data

4. Budget, Budget, Budget
   - Many budget flat over last four years, leading to decrease purchasing power due to inflation. See graphs on next page. For example:
     - BTS flat since 2004: 20% cut
     - BLS flat since 2010: 10% cut
   - Census needs to ramp up for 2020 testing but CR and House level problematic