



APR 11 2018

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter in which you urge the Department of Labor (the Department), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), to start collecting data on the prevalence and cost of sexual harassment in the workplace. The Department takes workplace sexual harassment very seriously. The Department is committed to preventing and eliminating workplace sexual harassment and understands your concerns about sexual harassment in the workplace. However, collecting this information would be complex and costly. There are a number of steps involved in any new data collection, including consultation with experts, cognitive testing, data collection training, and test collection. Once test collection is successful, there is an extensive clearance process before data collection can begin.

Questions about workplace harassment are very sensitive in nature. Employers may have difficulty providing the data you are requesting, as such information may not always be reported by victims and the release of such information may be subject to privacy or other restrictions. Also, like most voluntary federal statistical surveys, BLS surveys have experienced declining response rates in recent years. Requesting additional information, especially information that is sensitive in nature, may have detrimental effects on survey response.

Your letter cites a number of alternative sources of information on sexual harassment that may be able to provide further information. Another source may be the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey, a large, nationally representative survey where respondents provide sensitive personal information about themselves, including whether they experienced a victimization.

Thank you again for your interest in BLS. If you have additional questions, please contact the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 693-4600.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William J. Wiatrowski".

WILLIAM J. WIATROWSKI
Acting Commissioner