

## Statement on Federal Statistical and Research Agencies

*February 17, 2009*

The Council of the American Sociological Association (ASA) unanimously affirms its long-standing commitment to the independence, transparency and scientific leadership of federal agencies that conduct and support research and collect statistical data that are vital to the well-being of American society. The range, rigor and openness of research and statistics on the nation's many social institutions, processes and problems are enhanced by federal research and statistical agencies that are characterized by independence and transparency and led by persons with relevant scientific expertise who are appointed to fixed terms of office.

As a scientific society, the ASA carefully monitors the performance of federal research and statistical agencies that are essential to the conduct of high quality social science research. The ASA also monitors the development of proposals about the structure and operation of these agencies that may impact the extent to which the principles Council has affirmed (i.e., independence, transparency and scientific leadership) are institutionalized.

The ASA Council endorses the goals of recent proposals regarding the future of the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Institute of Justice, both agencies within the U.S. Department of Justice that are important national scientific investments. One proposal endorsed by the Executive Board of the American Society of Criminology, the Consortium of Social Science Associations, and similar organizations calls for moving these statistical and research agencies into a new independent office within the Justice Department.

The Council of the American Sociological Association encourages Congress to evaluate these proposals in terms of their impact on the independence, transparency and scientific leadership of these important federal science and statistical agencies.