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## Trump Removes Bureau of Labor Statistics Chief Amid Concerns Over Jobs Report and Tariffs

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President Donald Trump has dismissed Erika McEntarfer, the head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), following the release of a weaker-than-expected U.S. jobs report. The move, which Trump announced on social media, comes amid growing concerns over the economic impact of his administration's aggressive tariff policies and has sparked widespread criticism over perceived political interference in federal economic data.

Trump accused McEntarfer without offering evidence of manipulating employment figures for political reasons. The announcement, delivered shortly after the BLS reported only 73,000 new jobs added in July, coincided with a significant revision to previous employment data. The agency revised down job growth estimates for May and June by a combined 250,000 positions, amplifying concerns about a potential economic slowdown.

The firing rattled financial markets already on edge due to escalating trade tensions. The S&P 500 fell by 1.6%, echoing earlier declines in both European and Asian markets. Trump's decision also renewed questions about the independence of institutions responsible for critical economic indicators.

Ryan Sweet, Chief U.S. Economist at Oxford Economics, called the firing “a step in a very bad direction,” emphasizing the importance of reliable government data for businesses. He added that if confidence in the data erodes, it could pose serious challenges for market stability and informed policymaking.

The BLS, which operates under the U.S. Department of Labor, is responsible for collecting and analyzing data on employment, wages, and inflation. Its monthly jobs report is one of the most closely watched economic indicators in the country. Although the agency routinely revises its figures as new information becomes available, this month's downward adjustment was notably larger than average. Analysts attributed the shift in part to delayed responses from small businesses, which are often hardest hit by rising tariff costs.

McEntarfer, a career government economist with over two decades of service, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2023 with broad bipartisan support. Following her dismissal, Deputy Commissioner William Wiatrowski has been appointed as acting chief while the administration searches for a permanent replacement.

Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute defended McEntarfer's tenure, praising her professionalism and impartiality. “It is imperative that decisionmakers understand that government statistics are unbiased and of the highest quality,” Strain said, warning that undermining public trust in such data could harm the country.

Jed Kolko, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, also sounded alarm bells, describing the removal as a “five-alarm intentional harm” to the credibility of the U.S. statistical system. He noted the decision follows recent reductions in federal data collection efforts due to budget cuts, including reports related to inflation.

Despite the criticism, Trump stood by his decision. “We need accurate jobs numbers,” he said. “I believe the numbers were phony... so you know what I did? I fired her. And you know what I did? The right thing.” Trump maintains that his tariff policies are designed to promote American manufacturing and correct global trade imbalances, despite increasing evidence of economic strain.

As the administration presses forward with new rounds of tariffs, the reliability and independence of U.S. economic data are likely to remain under scrutiny. The situation highlights the fragile balance between economic policymaking and the institutions responsible for providing the data that inform it.