

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2021

Acting Director Rob Fairweather  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Acting Director Fairweather:

We write today regarding the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Area Standards Review Committee's (the Committee) recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to increase the minimum population for metropolitan centers to 100,000 from 50,000. We have heard from constituents in the five Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in Indiana that would be cut from the designation with multiple concerns over this proposal.

The proposal from the Committee to the OMB would eliminate five MSAs in Indiana: Terre Haute, Columbus, Kokomo, Michigan City-LaPorte, and Muncie. Each of these areas of the state have used a regional approach to economic development and positive impacts from each of these metro areas is felt in surrounding and more rural counties. Dropping the MSA designation for these specific cities not only will cause a negative impact on the municipalities themselves, but the ripple effect will be felt by a wider range of our constituents that rely on these cities as economic drivers in their areas of the state.

Local Economic Development Organizations (LEDOS) have relayed to our offices the negative impacts on their work this proposed rule would have if implemented. LEDOs routinely rely on federal data to understand and promote their local economies; Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates (OEWS) and Current employment Statistics (CES) are two examples provided at the MSA level. These data sets can lend important local information to site selectors and companies looking to expand, grow, or relocate into a community with niche expertise or labor talent and allows the LEDOs to market themselves with individualized differentiators and specialty areas.

Further, while we recognize that it is not the Committee or OMB's purpose or end goal to use this change in statistical designation to affect federal funding formulas or other non-statistical government activity, the reality is that there are housing, transportation, and Medicare reimbursement programs that are dependent on the MSA designation. The reduction in federal funding opportunities in these communities resulting from the proposed change would be devastating and not taking those impacts into account would be imprudent.

We ask that this recommendation from the Committee be denied and the current MSA definition be maintained by OMB. Please contact either of our offices should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Todd Young  
U.S. Senator



Mike Braun  
U.S. Senator