

Public Trust in Federal Statistics: Results from the U.S. Census Bureau

Jenny Hunter Childs

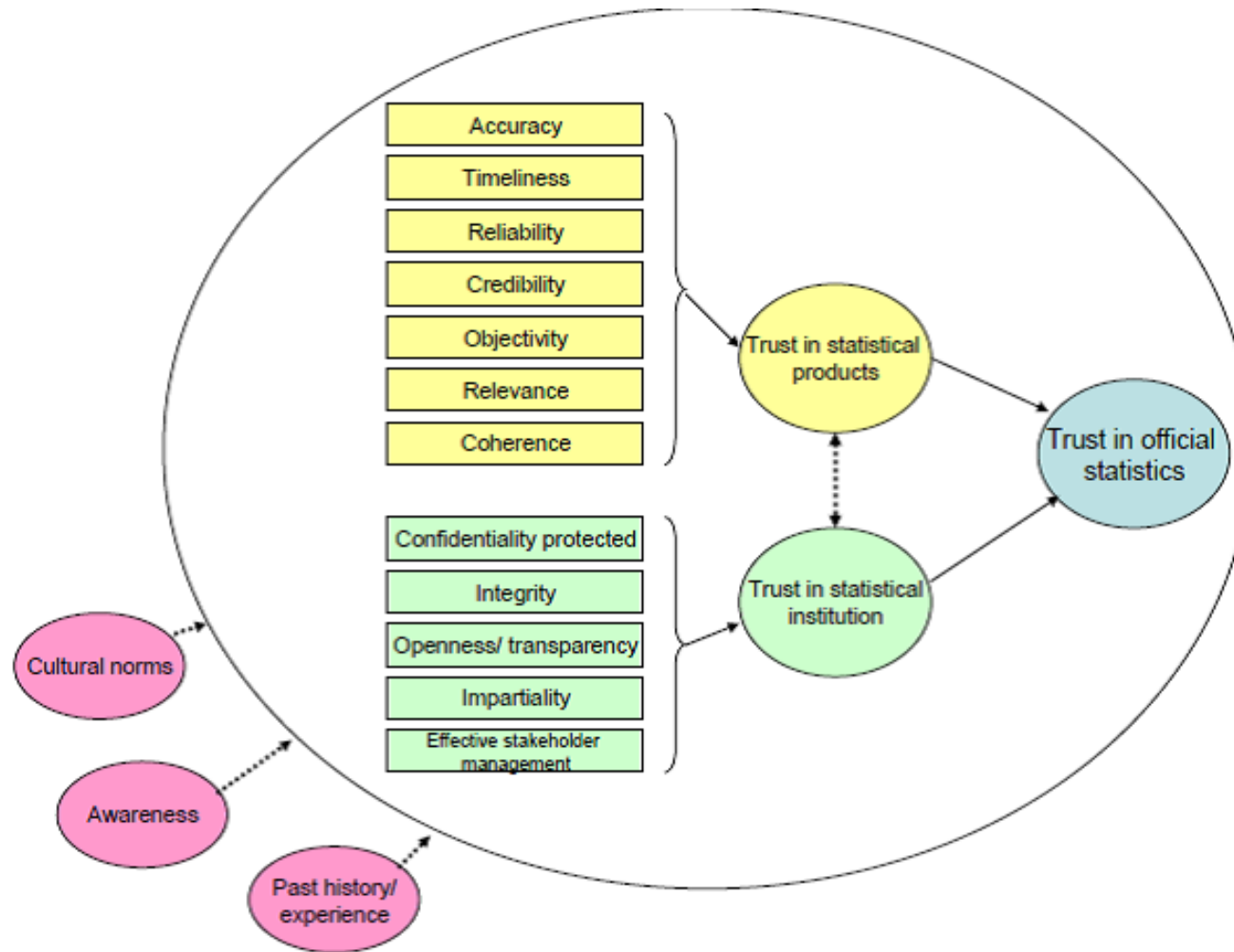
Senior Statistician for Demographic Research

Casey Eggleston

Research Survey Statistician

U.S. Census Bureau

Fellegi's Model of Trust in Official Statistics



Historic Data: 2012-2018

- Gallup Nightly Survey
 - About 121 responses daily
 - Subsample of National RDD Sample
 - Landline and Cellphone
 - AAPOR Response Rate 3 = 8-11%

Question Wording

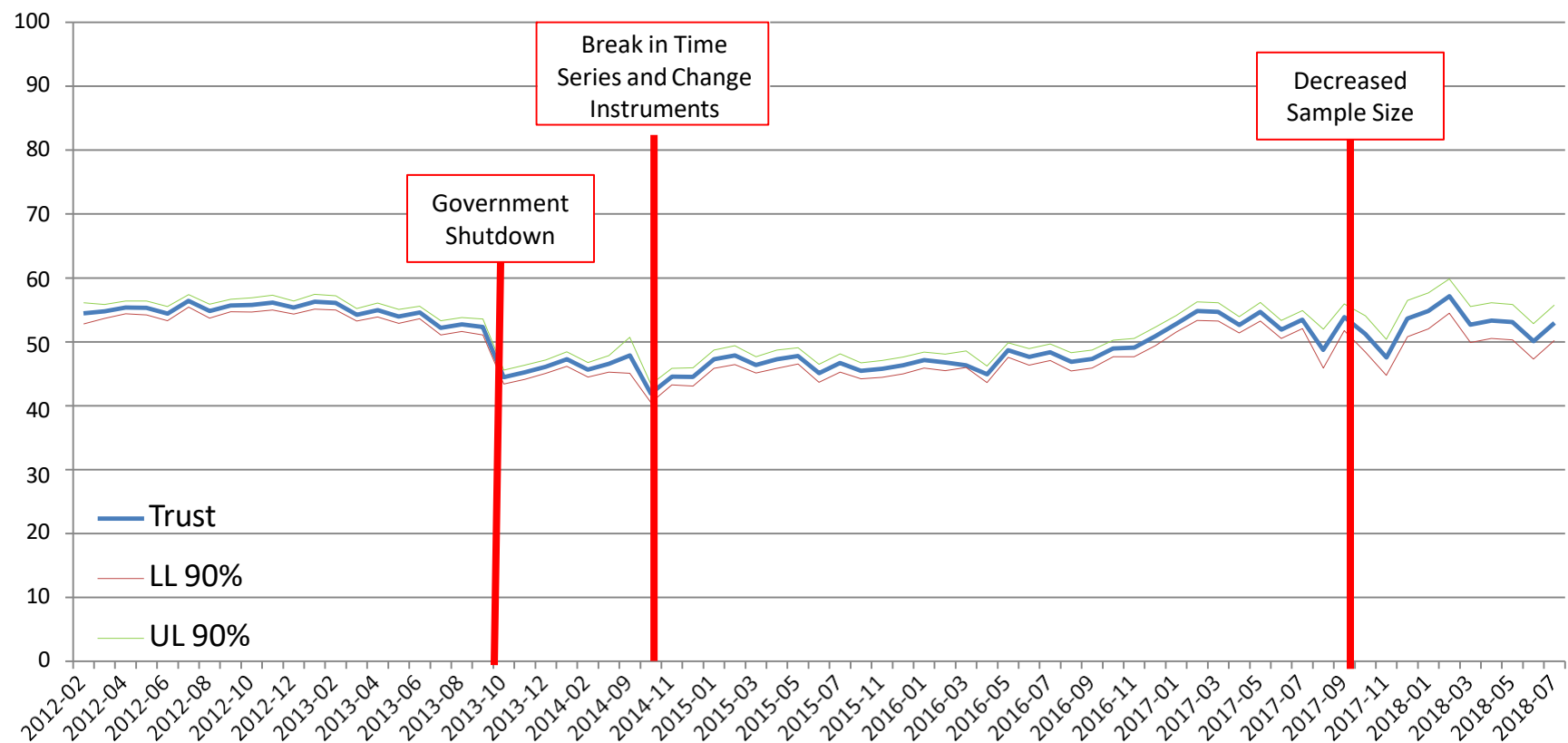


Personally, how much trust do you have in the federal statistics in the United States? Would you say that you tend to trust federal statistics or tend not to trust them? (Tend to Trust or Tend not to Trust)

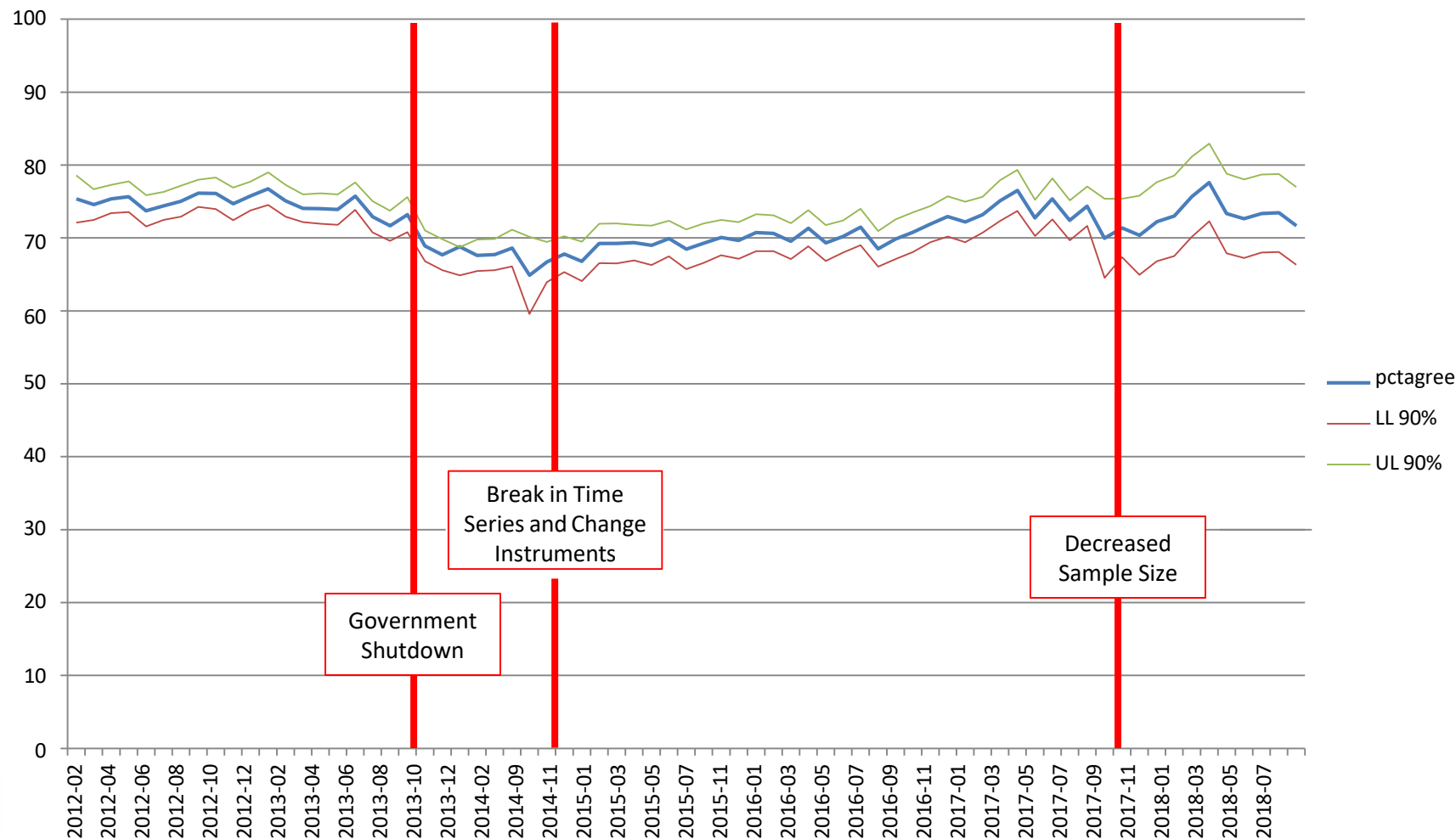


Policy makers need federal statistics to make good decisions about things like federal funding. (Likert scale: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)

2012-2018 Reported Trust in Federal Statistical System over Time



2012-2018 Reported Belief that Policy Makers Need Statistics for Decision-Making



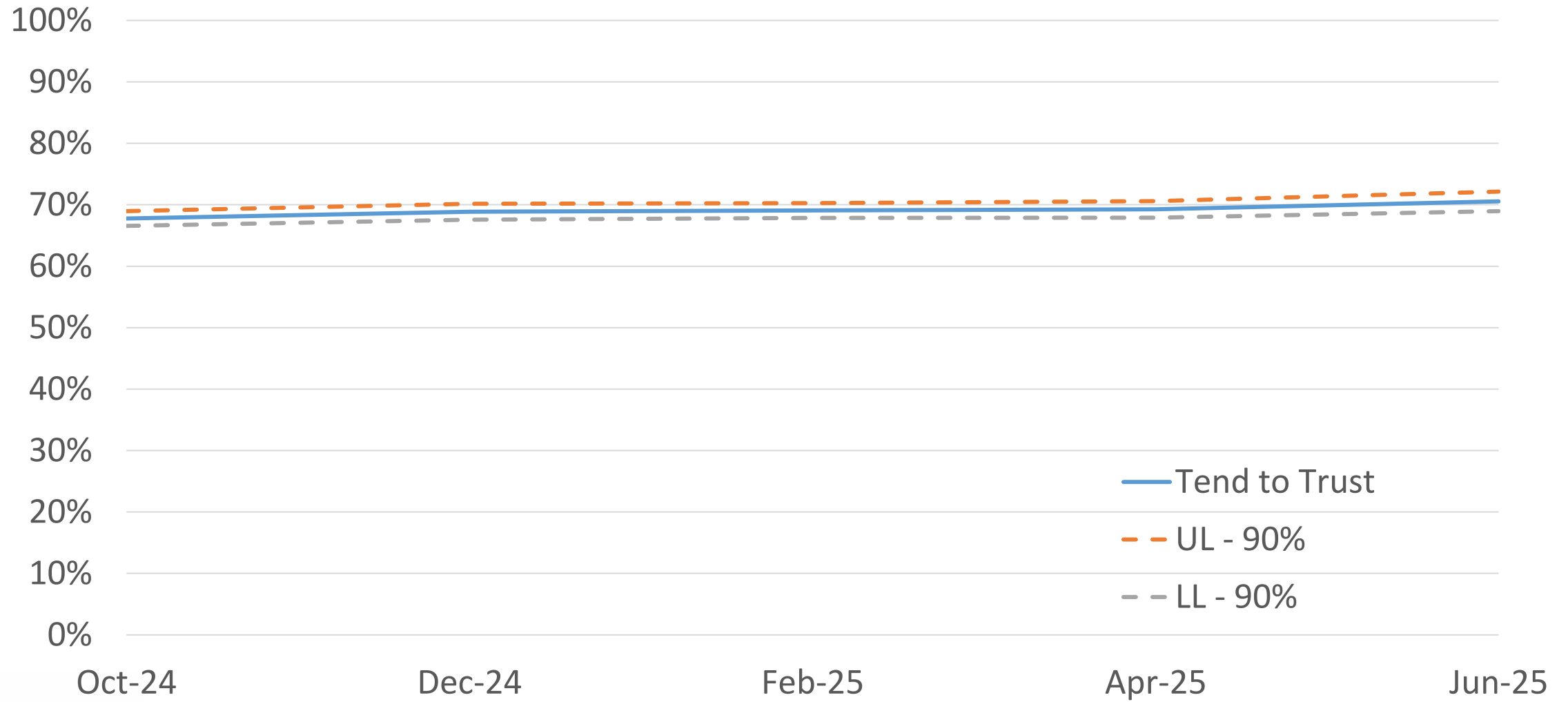
More recent data...

Census Household Trends and Outlooks Pulse Survey: 2024-2025

- 7,500 – 9,500 responses bimonthly
- Address-based recruited panel with incentives
- Predominately web survey (limited phone)
- Wave-Level AAPOR RR2 = 25.6%-50.8%
- Panel Monthly Cumulative Response Rate = 3.5%-9%

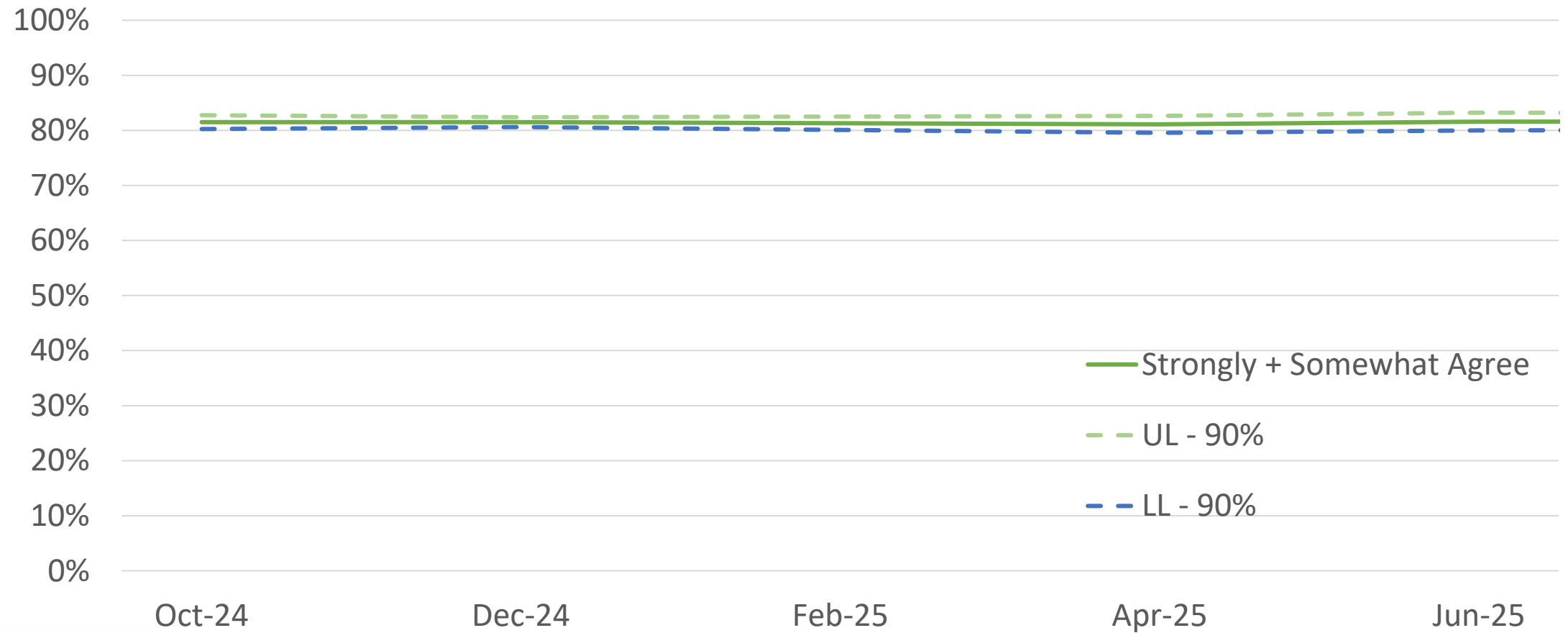
2024-2025

Reported Trust in Federal Statistical System over Time



2024-2025

Reported Belief that Policy Makers Need Statistics for Decision-Making



New Cross-Sectional Evidence

- New forthcoming cross-sectional data collected outside the panel environment
- Designed to be comparable to earlier cross-sectional measures
- Removes panel conditioning and incentive effects
- Results align closely with the long-term baseline
- Consistent with patterns observed across independent studies

Final Thought: Stability in a Time of Disruption

- Long-term data show **steady trends in trust**
- Recent variation depends heavily on **how we measure**
- Belief in the importance of federal statistics remains **consistently high**

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