

**SEN. JACK REED (RI)**

RANKING DEMOCRAT

SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY (MA)  
SEN. PAUL S. SARBANES (MD)  
SEN. JEFF BINGAMAN (NM)  
REP. CAROLYN B. MALONEY (NY)  
REP. MAURICE HINCHEY (NY)  
REP. LORETTA SANCHEZ (CA)  
REP. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS (MD)

*Congress of the United States*  
**Joint Economic Committee**  
Democrats

109TH  
CONGRESS

804 HART SENATE OFFICE  
BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6602  
202-224-0372  
FAX 202-224-5568  
[www.jec.senate.gov/democrats](http://www.jec.senate.gov/democrats)

CHAD STONE  
STAFF DIRECTOR

**For Immediate Release**  
April 7, 2006

**Contact:** Nan Gibson  
office: 202-224-0377  
cell: 202-320-4545

## **Payrolls Expand in March**

Washington, D.C. – The unemployment rate edged down to 4.7 percent in March, and 211,000 total payroll jobs were created, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Non-government jobs grew by 187,000.

“March’s payroll gains are welcome news,” said **Sen. Jack Reed** (D-RI), Ranking Democrat on the **Joint Economic Committee (JEC)**. “However, the labor market is still not as robust as it should be, and the President’s policies are not helping. Despite the decline in the unemployment rate during this recovery, too many people have not rejoined the labor force and strong productivity growth still has not translated into bigger paychecks for most workers.”

Overall growth in payroll employment has been modest by the standards of most economic recoveries. The 5.2 million jobs created since job losses peaked in August 2003 works out to only about 167,000 per month—weak by the standards of past economic recoveries when growth of 200,000 jobs per month or more was typical. Although the unemployment rate has come down, March’s 4.7 percent rate is still higher than the 4 percent rate achieved in the expansion of the 1990s.

Other indicators show continued hidden unemployment. The labor force participation rate is 1.1 percentage points lower than it was at the start of the recession and the fraction of the working-age population with a job is 1.3 percentage points lower. Long-term unemployment also persists. Nearly one in every five unemployed people – 1.3 million Americans – have been jobless for more than 26 weeks, the maximum number of weeks for receiving regular unemployment insurance benefits.

Higher prices for gasoline, home heating fuel, and medical care are squeezing the take home pay of workers. Average hourly earnings were stagnant during 2003 and have fallen during each of the past two years, after adjusting for inflation.

Overall, there are 7.0 million unemployed Americans, and 4.9 million additional workers who want a job but are not counted among the unemployed (including about 1.5 million who have searched for work enough to be considered marginally attached to the labor force). An additional 4.0 million people work part-time for economic reasons. The unemployment rate would be 8.2 percent if the figure included those who are marginally attached to the labor force and those who are forced to work part-time for economic reasons.

*The Joint Economic Committee, established under the Employment Act of 1946, was created by Congress to review economic conditions and to analyze the effectiveness of economic policy.*

– end –