

**REP. PETE STARK (CA)**

SENIOR DEMOCRAT  
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SEN. PAUL S. SARBANES (MD)  
SEN. JEFF BINGAMAN (NM)

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

108TH CONGRESS

804 HART SENATE OFFICE  
BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6602  
202-224-0372  
FAX 202-224-5568  
www.senate.gov/~jec/democrats

WENDELL PRIMUS  
STAFF DIRECTOR

**For Immediate Release**

April 2, 2004

**Contact:** Nan Gibson

202-224-0377

**LARGE JOBS DEFICIT REMAINS DESPITE MARCH GAINS**  
**President, GOP-Controlled House Again Fail to Extend UI for Long-term Unemployed**

Washington, D.C. – The unemployment rate edged up to 5.7 percent in March, and 308,000 payroll jobs were created – the first significant job gain in the Bush presidency. Private nonfarm payrolls grew by 277,000 jobs.

“The President and administration officials are expressing pride in the fact that the economy has finally started to create some jobs, but on the third anniversary of the Bush jobs slump, we are still in a deep hole,” said **Rep. Pete Stark** (D-CA), **Senior Democrat** on the **Joint Economic Committee (JEC)**. “We can’t really talk about a jobs recovery until we see robust job creation for several months,” added Stark.

President Bush is on track to be the first President since Herbert Hoover to end his term with fewer jobs than when he started. Since job losses peaked at 2.6 million in August, employers have created about 108,000 jobs per month, on average. At that pace, it would take nearly 1½ years to erase the current jobs deficit. President Bush would end his term in January 2005 with a deficit of nearly 756,000 jobs. Job creation would have to average 184,000 jobs per month from April 2004 to January 2005 just to erase the current 1.8 million Bush jobs deficit completely.

“Even though jobs grew in March, we still have a huge jobs deficit and long-term unemployment remains high,” said **Rep. Stark**. “House Republicans have thwarted efforts by Democrats to help nearly three million unemployed workers and their families avoid financial ruin by extending temporary federal jobless benefits for the next six months and retroactively for the last three months. Treasury Secretary Snow has said that President Bush would sign an extension of benefits if a bill reached his desk, but the Republican leadership has made this the ‘do-nothing for unemployed workers’ Congress,” added Stark.

Payrolls have shrunk by 2.0 million (1.5 percent) since the recession began in March 2001. Both in absolute numbers and in percentage terms, that loss is larger than it was at any point in the recession of the early 1990s. Long-term unemployment remained high in March, and now one in every four unemployed people – 2.0 million Americans – has been jobless for more than 26 weeks. The average length of a spell of unemployment is near its highest level since early 1984. Following the 1990-91 recession, the administration of President Bush’s father provided 20 weeks of temporary federal UI benefits in all states until 1.6 million jobs had been created.

Overall, there are 8.4 million unemployed Americans, and about 4.7 million additional workers who want a job but are not counted among the unemployed. An additional 4.7 million people work part-time because of the weak economy.

*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.*