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JOBS DEFICIT REMAINS DESPITE APRIL PAYROLL GAINS
Share of Long-term Unemployed at or Above 20 Percent for 19 Months, a New Record

Washington, D.C. – The unemployment rate was little changed at 5.6 percent in April, and 288,000 payroll jobs were created. Private nonfarm payrolls grew by 208,000 jobs. However, a new record was set in April as the share of the unemployed who have been jobless for more than six months has remained at or above 20 percent for 19 consecutive months, the longest period since the Labor Department has been collecting these data.

“The job creation picture may finally be brightening, but wages are stagnating and gas prices are soaring, so we still have a long way to go before workers begin to feel the effects of this recovery,” said **Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA)**, **Senior Democrat** on the **Joint Economic Committee (JEC)**.

President Bush is still 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 139,000 jobs per month, on average. At that pace, it would take 11 months to erase the current jobs deficit. President Bush would end his term in January 2005 with a deficit of nearly 234,000 jobs. Job creation would have to average 165,000 jobs per month from May 2004 to January 2005 just to erase the current 1.5 million Bush jobs deficit completely.

“We still have a jobs deficit and long-term unemployment made history last month by hovering at 20 percent for more than a year and a half,” said **Rep. Stark**. “These are not the kind of records the President should be setting at this point in a recovery.”

Long-term unemployment remained high in April, and now more than one in every five unemployed people – 1.8 million Americans – has been jobless for more than 26 weeks. The average spell of unemployment is nearly 20 weeks, and remains at a level not seen since early 1984.

Overall, there are 8.2 million unemployed Americans, and about 4.6 million additional workers who want a job but are not counted among the unemployed. An additional 4.6 million people work part-time because of the weak economy. The unemployment rate would be nearly 10 percent if the figure included those not counted among the unemployed and those who are forced to 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.

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