

A Good News Jobs Report, But We Can Do Better

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The June [jobs report](#) reveals an economy continuing to recover at a promising rate. With the addition of 202,000 private sector jobs in June, that makes 7.2 million private sector jobs over the last 40 consecutive months of growth.

The unemployment rate held steady at 7.6 percent — the 10th straight month that joblessness was below 8 percent (following three and one-half straight years of greater than 8 percent unemployment). Average hourly earnings are up as well, having risen 10 cents in June and 51 cents (or 2.2 percent) over the year. That means more workers with more money to spend in their communities, helping our economy continue to grow further.

Monthly Change in Total Private Employment, Feb. 2008 - June 2013. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program.

There were notable employment increases in several sectors, including leisure and hospitality (+75,000 jobs), professional and business services (+53,000), retail trade (+37,000) and financial activities (+17,000, more than double its prior 12-month average). The June report also included upward revisions in total nonfarm payroll employment for April and May — a total of 70,000 more jobs than previously reported.

This morning's report is good news. But our economy still is not performing at its full potential, still not recovering with the speed and strength that working families need. There are steps we can take to encourage more vigorous economic growth. President Obama's economic strategy couples long-term deficit reduction with short-term investments that will put Americans back to work now. But to date, Congress has failed to act decisively on a broad jobs agenda, instead preferring a misguided austerity approach that has slowed the recovery and hurt the middle class.

Employment in Major Industries Since the Employment Trough, February 2010 - June 2013. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program.

The U.S. Senate, however, recently passed a bill to fix our broken immigration system in a way that will improve border security and significantly strengthen our economy. The [Congressional Budget Office](#) has concluded that immigration reform will increase GDP by 3.3 percent and employment by 3.5 percent over the next decade, while reducing the deficit substantially and ensuring full Social Security solvency through 2035. It will put 11 million people on an earned path to citizenship, shutting down a shadow economy that depresses wages and undermines the competitiveness of businesses that play by the rules.

The House should quickly follow the Senate's lead and pass comprehensive immigration reform. Congress should send a bipartisan bill to the White House for the president's signature as soon as possible.

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