

### Executive Summary

This is the 16th edition of state-by-state snapshots issued by the Joint Economic Committee during the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress and includes state-level data through March 2012.

This month's report shows that three-in-five states gained private-sector jobs in March. Nationally, 121,000 private-sector positions were added during the month, a deceleration in the pace of job growth, following three straight months of private-sector job gains exceeding 200,000. Both manufacturing and the retail sectors continued to show strength during March: the ISM reading of 53.4 indicated expansion of economic activity in the manufacturing sector for the 32nd consecutive month and retail sales grew by 0.8 percent in March, following a gain 1.0 percent in February.

Workers continued to face wage pressure during the first 3 months of 2012, as wages failed to keep pace with inflation. The median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers were 1.9 percent higher than a year earlier, less than the 2.8 percent increase in the consumer price index for all urban consumers over that period; after adjusting for inflation, median earnings declined by 0.9 percent over the past year.

Against this backdrop, this report highlights progress at the state level in creating private-sector jobs and reducing unemployment and tracks the employment gains in key sectors, including manufacturing and professional and business services.

Report highlights include:

- Thirty states and the District of Columbia added private-sector jobs in March. New York (21,500) had the largest private-sector gains, followed by California (15,600) and Arizona (11,700). In the past 12 months, 46 states and the District of Columbia gained private-sector jobs, with Texas (300,600), California (227,000) and New York (155,000) recording the largest gains. Five other states (Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington) each posted private-sector job gains during the past year exceeding 50,000 jobs. Only Mississippi, Rhode Island and Wisconsin lost private-sector positions over the past 12 months, while Delaware saw no change. From March 2011 – March 2012, North Dakota (8.6 percent), the District of Columbia (3.7 percent), and Texas (3.5 percent) had the largest percentage gains in private-sector employment. During this period, 2.1 million private-sector positions were added nationally.

- Thirty states saw their unemployment rates decline in March, though only 7 states recorded statistically significant decreases. Mississippi and Oklahoma (-0.6 percentage point each) experienced the largest decreases, followed by Florida and Massachusetts (-0.4 percentage point each), Nevada (-0.3 percentage point), North Carolina (-0.2 percentage point) and Vermont (-0.1 percentage point). The remaining states and the District of Columbia did not experience statistically significant changes. In the past 12 months, Michigan and Alabama reported the largest decline in the unemployment rate (-2.0 percentage points). Sixteen other states recorded statistically significant declines over the past year. Nevada (12.0 percent) had the highest unemployment rate in March, followed by Rhode Island (11.1 percent) and California (11.0 percent). North Dakota had the lowest unemployment rate (3.0 percent). The national unemployment rate during the month was 8.2 percent, down from 8.9 percent a year earlier.
- Manufacturing employment expanded in 30 states in March. The largest gains were in Michigan (5,400), followed by Illinois (5,200) and Ohio (4,600). Nationally, the manufacturing sector accounted for more than 30 percent of the private-sector jobs gains during March. In the past 12 months, 32 states added manufacturing positions, with seven states – Michigan, Texas, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Washington, and Iowa – each adding more than 10,000 manufacturing jobs.
- Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia added jobs in the professional and business services sector in March. Illinois (8,100), Massachusetts (4,900), and New York (4,500) posted the largest increases. In the past year, 39 states and the District of Columbia have added professional and business services jobs, with California, New York and Texas recording the largest gains. In the last year, 597,000 jobs were added in the professional and business services sector.
- Thirty-five states and the District of Columbia added jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector during March. California (13,800), Pennsylvania (7,000) and Florida (6,600) saw the largest gains. In the past 12 months, 37 states and the District of Columbia added leisure and hospitality jobs. During this period, leisure and hospitality employment increased by 328,000 positions.

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