Executive Summary

This is the 23rd edition of state-by-state snapshots issued by the Joint Economic Committee during the 112th Congress and includes state-level data through October 2012.

This month's report shows that more than two out of three states gained private-sector jobs in October. Nationally, private-sector job gains totaled 184,000 during the month, the largest gain since February. Retail sales fell by 0.3 percent during October, as Superstorm Sandy may have kept consumers away from stores in the Northeast at the end of the month. Manufacturing activity, as measured by the ISM Manufacturing Index, expanded in October, the second straight month of expansion.

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

Report highlights include:

- Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia added private-sector jobs in October. California (54,400) had the largest private-sector gains, followed by Texas (24,500) and Maryland (16,700). In the past 12 months, 42 states and the District of Columbia gained private-sector jobs, with California (333,100), Texas (269,000) and New York (131,900) recording the largest gains. Connecticut, Delaware, Mississippi, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and West Virginia lost private-sector positions during the last year while Maine experienced no change. From October 2011 – October 2012, North Dakota (7.0 percent), Texas (3.1 percent) and Utah (2.9 percent) had the largest percentage gains in private-sector employment. During this period, nearly 2.0 million private-sector positions were added nationally.

- Fourteen states had statistically significant decreases in the unemployment rate during October and the remaining states and the District of Columbia did not have changes that were significant. South Carolina (-0.5 percentage point) had the largest decline, followed by Alaska, Wisconsin, and Louisiana (-0.4 point each). In the past 12 months, 18 states and the District of Columbia reported statistically significant decreases in the unemployment rate, with Nevada (-1.9 percentage points) recording the largest decline. The District of Columbia and Mississippi each recorded unemployment rate declines of -1.8 percentage point from October 2011 to October 2012. Nevada (11.5 percent) had the highest unemployment rate in October, followed by Rhode Island (10.4 percent) and California (10.1 percent). North Dakota again had the lowest unemployment rate (3.1 percent). The national unemployment rate during the month was 7.9 percent, down from 8.9 percent a year earlier.

- Manufacturing employment expanded in 25 states in October, as the nation added 13,000 manufacturing jobs during the month. Georgia added 4,500 manufacturing jobs, Indiana gained 3,100 and North Carolina saw a gain of 2,600. In the past 12 months, 32 states added manufacturing positions, with the largest gains in the Midwest. Illinois (21,200), Indiana (19,900), and Michigan and Washington (15,200 each) recorded the biggest gains in the past year. Overall, 189,000 manufacturing positions have been added across the country in the last 12 months.

- Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia added jobs in the professional and business services sector in October. California (9,000), Ohio (7,300) and Missouri (6,700) posted the largest increases. In the past year, 40 states have added professional and business services jobs, with California, New York and Texas recording the largest gains. During this period, 525,000 jobs were added in the professional and business services sector.

- Thirty-four states added jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector during October. Texas (8,700), New York (6,800) and Indiana (5,200) saw the largest gains. In the past 12 months, 44 states added leisure and hospitality jobs. During this time, leisure and hospitality employment increased by 340,000 positions.

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