



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN JIM SAXTON

PRESS RELEASE

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EMPLOYMENT HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Joint Economic Committee (JEC) will hold a hearing on the November employment situation on Friday, December 7, 2001, Chairman Jim Saxton (R-N.J.) announced today. Lois Orr, Acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), will testify.

“This hearing will provide the Committee an opportunity to examine the November employment data in great detail,” Saxton said. “The payroll employment figures, in particular, will be closely scrutinized by economists. This was the indicator the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) relied on most heavily in recently determining that the U.S. economy was in recession.

“A recent NBER memo stated that payroll employment is probably the single most reliable indicator of current economic activity, and suggested that its large October decline following the terrorist attacks was an important factor in the NBER decision that the economic slowdown had become a recession.

“Two of the other indicators used by the NBER – industrial production and manufacturing and trade sales – have been in decline since the third quarter of 2000. The declines in these two indicators are consistent with the sharp decline in the rate of GDP growth starting in the third quarter of 2000. The economic slowdown that began in the middle of 2000 is also reflected in a number of other economic and labor market data,” Saxton concluded.

Some of these other data include the following:

- The percentage of the population employed started to fall after April of 2000.
- The level of unemployment rose from 5.5 million persons in September 2000 to 6.0 million by January of 2001. The unemployment rate increased from 3.9 percent in September 2000 to 4.2 percent by January 2001.
- Factory employment has fallen by over 1 million jobs since a recent peak in July 2000.

HEARING TOPIC: The Employment Situation: November 2001
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
DATE: Friday, December 7, 2001
ROOM: 1334 Longworth House Office Building
WITNESS: Lois Orr, Acting Commissioner, Bureau of Labor Statistics

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