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VICE CHAIRMAN JIM SAXTON

PRESS RELEASE

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MOST JOB GROWTH IS IN HIGHER PAYING OCCUPATIONS

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – An examination of recent employment growth by occupation reveals that most of the net increase in employment reflects job growth in occupations that pay relatively well, Vice Chairman Jim Saxton said today. Saxton also noted today's release of other data showing that disposable personal income increased at a 4.9 percent rate in the first quarter of 2004, after adjustment for inflation.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data on employment levels between May 2003 and May 2004 show that 76.8 percent of the net increase in employment was in three categories that pay relatively well: management, professional and related occupations (43.8 percent); construction and extraction occupations (24.5 percent); or installation, maintenance and repair occupations (8.5 percent). Although not every job in each category is high paying, the data contradict the notion that most of the job growth is in low-paying jobs.

"The evidence shows that most of the new jobs created over the last year are in relatively high paying occupations," Saxton said. "The fastest growing occupational categories have been in management, professional, and related occupations. Another positive development was the separate release of data on personal income today. The Commerce Department reported that real personal disposable income increased 4.9 percent in the first quarter of 2004.

"Now that healthy job growth has resumed, pessimists have switched their focus to lamenting the supposed poor quality of the job growth," Saxton said. "This hamburger flipper argument was also made years ago during the 1980s boom, and had the same problem: the facts contradict this notion.

"The bottom line is that job growth is a very positive aspect of the economic expansion, and that over the last year it has occurred mostly in occupations that pay relatively well. As the expansion of output and employment continues, more good job opportunities will be available for American workers," Saxton concluded.

For more information on current employment conditions, please visit our website at www.house.gov/jec.

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