

State Median Wages and Unemployment Rates
Prepared by the Joint Economic Committee, June 2008

Recent employment reports have shown that the labor market is seriously distressed. Last month, the national unemployment rate rose a half percentage point – the largest one-month increase since 1986. In general, the nation has seen lackluster wage and job growth over the economic recovery of the 2000s. Between 2000 and 2007, across the nation, inflation-adjusted wages grew by just 0.3 percent per year, while productivity grew by 2.5 percent per year. As shown below, fourteen states have seen falling wages over that time period.¹ Additionally, many states have recessionary levels of unemployment: the unemployment rate in Michigan, Rhode Island, Alaska, Mississippi, California, South Carolina, Tennessee, Illinois, Ohio, Nevada, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia is already above 6.0 percent.

State	Median Wage (in 2007 dollars)		Average Annual Growth (%)	State Rank		Unemployment Rate May 2008	State Rank
	2000	2007					
Alabama	13.85	14.00	0.2	34		4.7	21
Alaska	18.36	18.99	0.5	25		7.0	49
Arizona	15.05	15.40	0.3	29		4.4	17
Arkansas	12.46	13.19	0.8	18		5.1	25
California	16.85	17.30	0.4	27		6.8	47
Colorado	17.47	17.50	0.0	36		4.9	22
Connecticut	19.02	19.31	0.2	32		5.4	31
Delaware	16.55	17.31	0.6	23		4.2	15
District of Columbia	18.52	20.19	1.2	6		6.6	46
Florida	14.45	15.00	0.5	24		5.5	35
Georgia	14.45	15.38	0.9	15		5.8	37
Hawaii	14.52	15.99	1.4	2		3.5	6
Idaho	13.97	14.87	0.9	14		3.6	8
Illinois	16.66	16.02	-0.6	46		6.4	43
Indiana	15.62	15.38	-0.2	43		5.3	28
Iowa	14.81	15.07	0.2	31		3.9	10
Kansas	14.48	15.16	0.7	22		4.6	20
Kentucky	14.45	14.40	0.0	40		6.2	40
Louisiana	13.70	14.42	0.7	20		4.0	12
Maine	13.96	15.00	1.0	10		5.4	32
Maryland	18.06	19.23	0.9	11		4.0	13
Massachusetts	18.06	19.23	0.9	12		4.9	23
Michigan	16.85	16.25	-0.5	45		8.5	51
Minnesota	18.06	17.31	-0.6	48		5.4	33

State	Median Wage (in 2007 dollars)		Average Annual Growth (%)	State Rank		Unemployment Rate May 2008	State Rank
	2000	2007					
Mississippi	13.54	13.45	-0.1	41		6.9	48
Missouri	15.65	15.00	-0.6	49		6.0	39
Montana	12.64	13.82	1.3	3		4.2	16
Nebraska	13.54	14.62	1.1	8		3.2	3
Nevada	14.57	15.48	0.9	16		6.2	41
New Hampshire	16.85	17.85	0.8	17		4.0	14
New Jersey	18.06	19.23	0.9	13		5.4	34
New Mexico	13.88	15.13	1.2	7		3.8	9
New York	16.60	17.00	0.3	28		5.2	26
North Carolina	14.45	14.42	0.0	38		5.8	38
North Dakota	12.76	13.94	1.3	5		3.3	5
Ohio	15.95	15.30	-0.6	47		6.3	42
Oklahoma	13.54	14.27	0.8	19		3.5	7
Oregon	15.31	15.45	0.1	35		5.6	36
Pennsylvania	15.66	15.85	0.2	33		5.2	27
Rhode Island	16.85	16.00	-0.7	51		7.2	50
South Carolina	14.93	14.29	-0.6	50		6.5	45
South Dakota	13.54	14.00	0.5	26		2.9	1
Tennessee	14.45	14.06	-0.4	44		6.4	44
Texas	14.30	14.30	0.0	37		4.5	19
Utah	15.05	15.00	0.0	39		3.2	4
Vermont	14.86	16.00	1.1	9		4.9	24
Virginia	17.05	16.83	-0.2	42		3.9	11
Washington	17.28	18.18	0.7	21		5.3	29
West Virginia	13.72	15.00	1.3	4		5.3	30
Wisconsin	15.65	16.00	0.3	30		4.4	18
Wyoming	13.88	15.63	1.7	1		2.9	2
United States	15.65	16.00	0.3			5.5	

Sources: Joint Economic Committee analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program data and Center for Economic and Policy Research analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group Files.

ⁱ Fourteen states had inflation-adjusted median wages that were lower in 2007 than they were in 2000. However, only eleven states register negative average annual growth rates due to rounding.