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Statement of

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Nonfarm payroll employment rose by 148,000 in December, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.1 percent. Employment increased in health care, construction, and manufacturing. Job growth totaled 2.1 million in 2017, compared with a gain of 2.2 million in 2016.

Incorporating revisions for October and November, which decreased nonfarm payroll employment by 9,000 on net, monthly job gains have averaged 204,000 over the past 3 months.

In December, employment in health care increased by 31,000. Over the month, employment continued to trend up in ambulatory health care services (+15,000) and hospitals (+12,000). In 2017, health care added 300,000 jobs, less than the increase of 379,000 jobs in 2016.

Construction added 30,000 jobs in December. Specialty trade contractors accounted for most of the gain (+24,000).

Construction employment rose by 210,000 in 2017, compared with its 2016 gain of 155,000.

Manufacturing added 25,000 jobs in December. Within the industry, employment grew in machinery (+6,000), fabricated metal products (+5,000), primary metals (+3,000), and semiconductors and electronic components (+2,000). In 2017, factory employment increased by 196,000, following little change in 2016.

Employment in food services and drinking places changed little in December (+25,000). Over the year, the industry has added 249,000 jobs, about in line with a gain of 276,000 in 2016.

Employment in professional and business services was little changed in December (+19,000). In 2017, this industry added 527,000 jobs, in line with its 2016 gain.

Employment in retail trade was also little changed in December (-20,000). Within the industry, employment declined by 27,000 in general merchandise stores. Employment in retail trade edged down in 2017 (-67,000), following a gain of 203,000 in 2016.

Employment in other major industries--mining, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, information, financial activities, and government--changed little in December.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private nonfarm payrolls increased by 9 cents in December to \$26.63. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 2.5 percent. From November 2016 to November 2017, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased by 2.2 percent (on a seasonally adjusted basis).

The major labor market indicators from the survey of households showed little or no change in December. The unemployment rate was 4.1 percent for the third month in a row, following declines earlier in the year. The number of unemployed people, at 6.6 million, was essentially unchanged over the month but was down by 926,000 over the year.

Among the unemployed in December, 1.5 million had been searching for work for 27 weeks or longer. These long-term unemployed accounted for 22.9 percent of the total unemployed.

The labor force participation rate, at 62.7 percent, was unchanged over the month and over the year. The employment-population ratio was unchanged at 60.1 percent in December but was up by 0.3 percentage point over the year.

The number of people working part time for economic reasons, also referred to as involuntary part-time workers, was essentially unchanged at 4.9 million in December. Over the past year, the number of involuntary part-time workers declined by 639,000.

Among those neither working nor looking for work in December, 1.6 million were marginally attached to the labor force, little different from a year earlier. Discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached who believed that no jobs were available for them, numbered 474,000 in December, also little changed from a year earlier. (People who are marginally attached to the labor force had not looked for work in the 4 weeks prior to the survey but wanted a job, were available for work, and had looked for a job within the last 12 months.)

Following our regular annual practice, seasonal adjustment factors for the household survey data have been updated with the release of December data. Seasonally adjusted estimates going back 5 years--to January 2013--were subject to revision.

In summary, nonfarm payroll employment rose by 148,000 in December, and the unemployment rate remained at 4.1 percent.