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Statement of

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Commissioner
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In March, nonfarm payroll employment increased by 196,000, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.8 percent. Over the month, notable job gains occurred in health care and in professional and technical services.

Incorporating revisions for January and February, which increased nonfarm payroll employment by 14,000, monthly job gains averaged 180,000 in the first quarter of this year. In 2018, employment gains averaged 223,000 per month.

Health care employment rose by 49,000 in March, with gains occurring in ambulatory health care services (+27,000), hospitals (+14,000), and nursing and residential care facilities (+9,000). Over the past 12 months, health care has added 398,000 jobs.

Employment in professional and technical services increased by 34,000 in March and 311,000 over the past 12 months. In March, computer systems design and related services added 12,000

jobs. Employment continued to trend up in architectural and engineering services (+6,000) and in management and technical consulting services (+6,000).

Employment continued to trend up in food services and drinking places in March (+27,000), in line with its average monthly growth over the prior 12 months.

Construction employment changed little over the month (+16,000). Over the past 12 months, construction has added 246,000 jobs.

Manufacturing employment changed little in March (-6,000), following little change in February (+1,000). In the 12 months prior to February, manufacturing had added an average of 22,000 jobs per month. Within the industry, employment in motor vehicles and parts fell by 6,000 in March.

Employment in other major industries--including mining, wholesale trade, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, information, financial activities, and government--showed little change over the month.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private nonfarm payrolls rose by 4 cents in March to \$27.70, following a 10-cent gain in February. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 3.2 percent. From February 2018 to February 2019, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

(CPI-U) increased by 1.5 percent (on a seasonally adjusted basis).

Turning now to data from the survey of households, the unemployment rate held at 3.8 percent in March. The number of unemployed people, at 6.2 million, was essentially unchanged over the month.

The number of unemployed people searching for work for 27 weeks or longer, at 1.3 million, was little changed in March. These long-term unemployed accounted for 21.1 percent of the total unemployed.

The labor force participation rate, at 63.0 percent, changed little over the month and has shown little movement on net over the past 12 months. The employment-population ratio was 60.6 percent in March and has been either 60.6 percent or 60.7 percent since October 2018.

In March, 4.5 million people were working part time for economic reasons (also referred to as involuntary part-time workers), little changed from the previous month.

Among those neither working nor looking for work in March, 1.4 million were considered marginally attached to the labor force, little different 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.) Discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached who believed no jobs were available for them, numbered 412,000 in March, also little different from a year earlier.

In summary, nonfarm payroll employment increased by 196,000 in March, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.8 percent.