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Statement of

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Nonfarm payroll employment increased by 138,000 in April, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.7 percent. Over the year, nonfarm employment has risen by about 2 million. Average hourly earnings were up by 9 cents over the month.

In the service-providing sector, the health care industry remained a steady source of job growth in April, as employment rose by 23,000. Job gains were spread among nursing and residential care facilities, hospitals, and doctors' offices.

Employment in finance and insurance continued to expand over the month. The credit intermediation industry added 9,000 jobs, and the insurance industry grew by 10,000 jobs. Since last September, employment growth in the insurance industry has strengthened; 55,000 jobs were added

over this period. Employment in professional and business services and in food services and drinking establishments continued to trend up.

Retail trade employment was down over the month. Employment in general merchandise stores declined by 34,000, following a large increase in March. Overall, the number of retail jobs has changed little, on net, since the middle of last year.

In the goods-producing sector, manufacturing employment increased by 19,000 over the month, with gains occurring in several durable goods industries. Motor vehicles employment was up by 12,000 over the month. Despite the gain, motor vehicles employment in April was about the same as in January of this year. Over the month, there also were job gains in computer and electronic products and in fabricated metals. Manufacturing hours were unchanged in April, and factory overtime edged down.

Employment in support activities for mining continued to rise in April, primarily in activities related to oil and gas operations. Since its recent low point in April 2003, mining support employment has grown by 79,000, or 45 percent.

Construction employment was little changed for the second straight month following large gains in January and

February. Since its last low point in March 2003, the construction industry has added 855,000 jobs.

Average hourly earnings for production or nonsupervisory workers in the private sector rose by 9 cents in April to \$16.61. This followed gains of 5 cents in March and 7 cents in February. Over the year, average hourly earnings have risen by 3.8 percent.

Most major indicators from the household survey showed little or no change over the month. The unemployment rate held at 4.7 percent in April and has been at or near that level since January. The civilian labor force participation rate was 66.1 percent in April. In the past year, the participation rate has remained in a narrow range from 66.0 to 66.2 percent.

In summary, nonfarm payroll employment increased by 138,000 in April, and the unemployment rate held at 4.7 percent.