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Statement of

Erica L. Groshen
Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Nonfarm payroll employment increased by 175,000 in May, and the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 7.6 percent. Over the prior 12 months, job gains averaged 172,000 per month. In May, employment increased in professional and business services, food services and drinking places, and retail trade.

Employment in professional and business services grew by 57,000 over the month and by 589,000 over the year. In May, employment continued to trend up in temporary help services (+26,000), computer systems design (+6,000), and architectural and engineering services (+5,000).

Food services and drinking places added 38,000 jobs in May. Employment in the industry has risen by 337,000 in the past 12 months.

Retail trade employment increased by 28,000 in May, as general merchandise stores continued to add jobs (+10,000). Over the past 12 months, retail trade has added 258,000 jobs.

In May, health care employment continued to trend up (+11,000). Job gains in home health care services (+7,000) and outpatient care centers (+4,000) more than offset a loss in hospitals (-6,000).

Within government, federal government employment declined by 14,000 in May. Over the past 3 months, federal government employment has decreased by 45,000.

Employment in other major industries showed little or no change in May.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private nonfarm payrolls changed little in May (+1 cent). Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 46 cents, or 2.0 percent. From April 2012 to April 2013, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased by 1.1 percent.

Turning now to our survey of households, the unemployment rate, at 7.6 percent, was essentially unchanged in May and has shown little movement since February. The number of unemployed persons, at 11.8 million, was little changed over the month.

The labor force participation rate was essentially unchanged at 63.4 percent in May. Over the year, the labor force participation rate has declined by 0.4 percentage point.

The employment-population ratio, at 58.6 percent, was unchanged in May and has shown little movement, on net, in the past 12 months.

Among persons who were neither working nor looking for work in May, 2.2 million were classified as marginally attached to the labor force, down by 259,000 from a year earlier. These individuals 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. The number of discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached who believed that no jobs were available for them, was 780,000 in May, essentially unchanged from a year earlier.

In summary, nonfarm payroll employment increased by 175,000 in May, and the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 7.6 percent.