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Statement of

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Commissioner

Bureau of Labor Statistics

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In August, nonfarm payroll employment changed little (-54,000), and the unemployment rate was about unchanged at 9.6 percent. Large declines in federal government employment continued as additional Census 2010 workers completed their temporary jobs. Private-sector employment continued to trend up modestly (+67,000) and has increased by an average of 72,000 per month over the past 4 months.

In August, federal government employment fell for the third consecutive month. The number of temporary Census 2010 workers declined by 114,000, following declines of 225,000 and 143,000 in June and July, respectively. This leaves 82,000 temporary decennial census workers on the payroll.

Health care continued to add jobs (+28,000) in August, with employment increases in both ambulatory health care services and hospitals. Employment in mining (+8,000) also continued to expand, reflecting ongoing job gains in support activities for mining.

Temporary help services employment was up over the month (+17,000), following virtually no gain in July. Since September of last year, this industry has added 392,000 jobs.

Manufacturing employment fell by 27,000 over the month, mostly offsetting an increase in July. As with July's gain, most of August's decline occurred in motor vehicles and parts manufacturing, where a number of plants deviated from their normal retooling practice of shutting down in July and reopening in August. Over the 2-month span, employment was essentially unchanged in motor vehicles and parts.

In construction, employment was up by 19,000 in August; however, about half of the increase was due to the return of 10,000 workers to their jobs following a strike in July. On net, construction employment is about unchanged since March.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private nonfarm payrolls rose by 6 cents in August to \$22.66. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 1.7 percent. From July 2009 to July 2010, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers increased by 1.3 percent.

Turning to measures from the survey of households, the unemployment rate was 9.6 percent in August. From May through August, the jobless rate remained in a range of 9.5 to 9.7 percent. The number of unemployed persons who had been jobless for 6 months or more declined to 6.2 million in August, or 42 percent of the unemployed.

The employment-population ratio was 58.5 percent in August, essentially unchanged from the prior 2 months. Among the employed, the number of individuals working part time who preferred full-time work rose by 331,000 over the month to 8.9 million.

In summary, both nonfarm payroll employment and the unemployment rate were little changed in August. Job losses continued in federal government as Census 2010 activities scaled back, while private-sector employment continued on a modest upward trend.