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Statement of

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Commissioner
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Friday, December 2, 2011

The unemployment rate fell from 9.0 to 8.6 percent in November, and nonfarm payroll employment rose by 120,000. November's gain in payroll jobs was in line with the average increase over the prior 12 months (+131,000). Over the month, employment continued to trend up in retail trade, professional and business services, health care, and leisure and hospitality.

Retail employment increased by 50,000 in November, with both clothing and accessories stores and electronics and appliance stores adding jobs over the month. Since a recent low in December 2009, retail employment has increased by 319,000.

Professional and business services employment continued to trend up in November (+33,000), with a modest gain in temporary help services. Health care employment also continued to expand in November (+17,000). Within this industry, hospitals added 9,000 jobs.

In the leisure and hospitality industry, employment in food services and drinking places rose by 33,000 over the month. The gain more than offset an employment decline of 12,000 in the accommodation industry. Over the last 12 months, leisure and hospitality added 253,000 jobs, largely in food services.

Employment in other major private-sector industries changed little over the month. Government employment continued to trend down. Since the second half of 2008, state and local government combined have shed about 600,000 jobs, with the vast majority from local government.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private nonfarm payrolls declined by 2 cents in November to \$23.18. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 1.8 percent. From October 2010 to October 2011, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased by 3.6 percent.

Turning to measures from the survey of households, the unemployment rate fell 0.4 percentage point to 8.6 percent in November. Prior to this decline, the jobless rate had shown little change since April.

There were 13.3 million unemployed persons in November, a decline of 594,000 from October. The labor force, which is the sum of the unemployed and the employed, was down by a little more than half that amount. The labor force participation rate, at 64.0 percent, declined over the month but has remained in the

narrow range of 63.9 to 64.2 percent thus far in 2011. The employment-population ratio, at 58.5 percent, was little changed over the month.

In November, the jobless rate for adult men (those age 20 and over) fell by half a percentage point to 8.3 percent. Employment among adult men rose over the month, and their labor force participation rate (73.4 percent) was unchanged. In contrast, the unemployment rate for adult women (7.8 percent) changed little, but their labor force participation rate (59.5 percent) declined.

In summary, the unemployment rate was 8.6 percent in November, down by 0.4 percentage point over the month. Nonfarm payroll employment rose by 120,000.