

Unemployment May Worsen For Black Workers

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WASHINGTON (NNPA) – The economy beat expectations in February by adding 236,000 jobs nearly, doubling 119,000 jobs created in January, according to the Labor Department. Overall, the unemployment rate dipped to 7.7 percent, but the Black jobless rate stalled at 13.8 percent, unchanged since January.

According to some labor experts, the numbers could signal a tough year ahead, especially if Washington lawmakers continue down the sequester path of cut-first and ask questions later.

Including February's report, the three-month average Black unemployment rate was 13.9 percent, more than twice the rate of White workers who posted a 6.9 percent three-month average jobless rate.

The unemployment rate for Black men at least 20 years old dropped from 13.4 percent to 12.9 percent in February and for White men looking for work, the number decreased from 6.6

percent to 6.3 percent. For White women, the jobless rate also decreased from 6.4 percent to 6.0 percent. But Black women continued to lose ground posting 12.5 percent unemployment rate, an increase from the 12.3 percent the previous month. That represents the highest unemployment rate for Black women since October

Not Hiring
Come Back Later

2012. "We're having a very weak recovery. We are creating jobs, but we're not creating jobs at a strong enough pace to dramatically decrease the unemployment rate," said Algernon Austin, director of the Race, Ethnicity, and the Economy program at the Economic Policy Institute. "That's why we need more stimulus activity not budget cutting at this time, Even though the increase in the number of jobs added was a

welcomed surprise, economists remained cautiously optimistic about the latest jobs report as the effects of the "never-gonna-happen" deep and punishing budget cuts, known as sequestration, threaten job growth. "The only concern would be what happens over the next few months, because of the sequester," said Steven Pitts, an economist at the Labor Center at University of California at Berkeley, Calif. The sequester and a number

of measures planned by Congress and the president, could erase more than 700,000 jobs from the books, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Pitts said that sequestration and other policies designed to reduce the deficit will cause contraction in the economy and slow down any type of improvement. Instead, Pitts said that, lawmakers should focus on targeted job programs for Blacks and addressing discrimination in hiring practices that often contribute to the 2 to 1 unemployment gap between Black workers and White workers.

In a recent brief for the Economic Policy Institute, a non-partisan think tank focused on fiscal issues affecting low- and middle-income earners, Austin wrote: "Unemployment projections show essentially no improvement from the high levels that prevailed at the end of 2012. However, this prognosis may prove overly optimistic, as poor policy choices by Congress could easily worsen the economic outlook." Rep. Marcia Fudge [D-Ohio], chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, echoed those concerns.

"With sequestration expected to further reduce public sector jobs where African Americans are heavily concentrated, and with significant cuts to unemployment benefits, workforce development, housing and health and human services programs, minorities and struggling communities will bear the burden of reversal to any progress in the making." The public sector shed 10,000 jobs in February and 21,000 jobs in January averaging a loss of 12,000 every month over the past three months. Sequestration is just going to make that worst, said Austin. Most of the losses in the public sector happened at the state and local level and Austin said that the conversation around sequestration has shown people how much we need food inspectors, air traffic controllers, and teachers. In 2011, Black workers accounted for 20 percent of the public sector workforce. "An important part of having a healthy economy is having a public sector," said Austin. "We should be worried for Black workers, because of the hit to the public sector and because of the weak job growth overall."

McGinn, City Council Create Economic Development Commission

On Monday, Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn and Council President Sally J. Clark officially announced the formation of the Economic Development Commission (the Commission) to examine Seattle's ability to compete in the global economy of the 21st century.

"Since I launched the Seattle Jobs Plan in 2010, we've been hearing from the people of Seattle who are building our recovery that they need responsive city government; a supportive regulatory environment, investments in infrastructure, and skilled workers," said Mayor Mike McGinn. "I'm looking forward to working with the Commission and the insights and ideas that they will bring to continue to build an innovative economy that is sustainable, that enhances our quality of life, and that helps more people share in our prosperity."

The Commission is comprised of 15 members, and all commissioners serve a one-year term. Members of the Commission represent a cross section of business, industry and higher education to advise the Mayor and City Council on the development of plans, policies, regulations, and strategies that have substantial impact on creating and maintaining an innovative economy that is resilient, sustainable, and equitable.

"We live in an amazing place with a startling number of innovators and great talent, and

we can't take any of it for granted," said Sally J. Clark, Council President and chair of the Council's Committee on Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations. "This Commission will help us focus the City's role in supporting innovation and talent for shared prosperity."

"Community leaders initiated the idea to create an economic development commission in 2011 during a series of Council-led forums," said Councilmember Richard Conlin. "The Commission will greatly assist the City in recommending policy priorities and actions that implement the City's key principles for economic development; quality of life, hospitable and responsive business climate, resilient and sustainable local economy, collaboration and civic leadership, educated workforce, and adaptive strategies."

The ultimate goal of the Commission is to help the City of Seattle develop and advance a vision for Seattle's economic development that nurtures a policy and regulatory environment that encourages innovation and supports business formation and growth, retention, and expansion.

"The University of Washington is deeply interested in training our students to meet and to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities of the future. At the same time, we are fully committed to moving

the incredible research done at the University into the market and into our communities where it can improve lives," said Michael Young, president, University of Washington. "For the University to maintain its capacity as an engine for economic stimulation and growth, we need the right environment and partners. The City of Seattle's Economic Development Commission can support just such an ecosystem, and we are very excited to participate."

The Commission will examine existing economic development strategies developed by the city and regional partners, seek additional information if necessary, and examine Seattle's ability to compete in the global economy of the 21st century in terms of innovation, human capital, regulatory process improvement and measuring success.

"As an entrepreneur and investor in early-stage companies, I know that innovation takes place over long cycles," said Chris DeVore, partner, Founders' Co-op and TechStars Seattle. "I'm interested in making sure this Commission is thinking about how Seattle can attract the right talent and create the right ecosystem so that the next generation of new, innovative companies will be founded here rather than somewhere else in the world."

The initial charge of the Commission will be to produce and present a report to the Executive and the Council outlining findings and measures that could be implemented to support business innovation and prepare our workforce to meet the needs of our economy. The Commission will be staffed by

the City's Office of Economic Development.

"As a small business owner of a 17-person construction management and project controls company, our business priority is to hire locally and provide training for this industry," Tanya Jimale, president and CEO of JTS. "I want to bring my insights and employer experience together with the Commission to bring in more job opportunities and transition people in the community into good, solid jobs with livable wages."

The initial 15 Economic Development Commission members are: Maud Daudon, President & CEO, Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce; Chris DeVore, Partner, Founders' Co-op and TechStars Seattle; David Freiboth, Executive Secretary Treasurer, King County Central Labor Council and Vice President, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Christine Hanna, Co-Founder/Co-Director, Seattle Good Business Network; Tanya Jimale, President and CEO, JTS; Rob Mohn, President, RAM Columbia, LLC; Alan Nay, Founder, World Famous; Sarah Patterson, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Virginia Mason Medical Center; Michael Rawding, Principal, Deerhorn Advisors; Chris Rivera, President, Washington Biotechnology and Biomedical Association; Brad Tong, Principal, Shiels, Obletz, Johnsen, Inc; Dr. Jill Wakefield, Chancellor, Seattle Community Colleges; Ken Willman, Chief Legal Officer, Russell Investments; Tay Yoshitani, CEO, Port of Seattle; and Michael Young, President, University of Washington.

Police Commission

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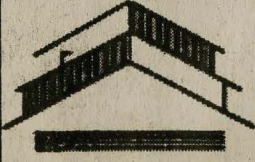
City Councilmember; Marcel Purnell, Youth Undoing Institutional Racism; Jennifer Shaw, ACLU of Washington, deputy director, Kevin Stuckey, Seattle Police Department, Officer; Kip Tokuda, former State Representative for the 37th Legislative District; Rev. Harriet Walden, Co-founder of Mothers for Police Accountability; and Rev. Aaron Williams, Mount Zion Baptist Church, Senior Pastor. The committee will also consider two pieces of

legislation to provide resources and staffing to execute the Settlement Agreement. One Bill will create a new Office of the Community Police Commission within the Executive Department at a cost of \$362,865. The second Bill will provide funding to staff seven new positions at the Seattle Police Department to implement the Settlement Agreement at a set budget of \$2,767,110. The two budget expenditures were accounted for when Council adopted the 2013 budget.

THE SEATTLE MEDIUM (ISSN 746-5394) is published weekly on Wednesday for \$34.00 per year by Tiloben Publishing Company, Inc., 2600 South Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98144. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, WA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: THE SEATTLE MEDIUM, 2600 South Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98144.

Chris B. Bennett & Joan Owens, Co-Publishers

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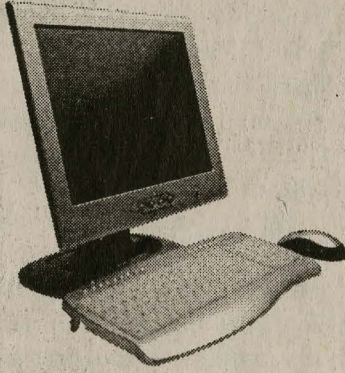


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