

**REP. PETE STARK (CA)**

RANKING MEMBER

SEN. JACK REED (RI)

SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY (MA)

SEN. PAUL S. SARBANES (MD)

SEN. JEFF BINGAMAN (NM)

REP. CAROLYN B. MALONEY (NY)

REP. MELVIN L. WATT (NC)

REP. BARON P. HILL (IN)

**Congress of the United States**  
**Joint Economic Committee**  
Democrats

108TH CONGRESS

804 HART SENATE OFFICE  
BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6602  
202-224-0372  
FAX 202-224-5568  
[www.senate.gov/~jec/democrats](http://www.senate.gov/~jec/democrats)

WENDELL PRIMUS  
STAFF DIRECTOR

**For Immediate Release**

April 4, 2003

**Contact:** Nan Gibson

202-224-0377

**JOB SLUMP IS MOST PERSISTENT SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION**

Latest Data Show No Sign of Recovery

Washington, D.C. – The current economic slump is now two years old, and there are 2.6 million fewer private payroll jobs than there were when the recession began. Such an abject failure to make up lost ground this far after the onset of a recession is unprecedented since the Great Depression. Today's news that the economy lost another 108,000 jobs (68,000 in the private sector) in March and that the unemployment rate remained at 5.8 percent indicates that a turnaround in the labor market is unlikely anytime soon.

“We have a persistent jobs deficit that needs to be addressed seriously and quickly,” said **Rep. Pete Stark** (D-CA), Ranking Democrat of the **Joint Economic Committee**. “Yet not since Herbert Hoover has there been a President whose policies are so out of touch with the real problems facing American workers.”

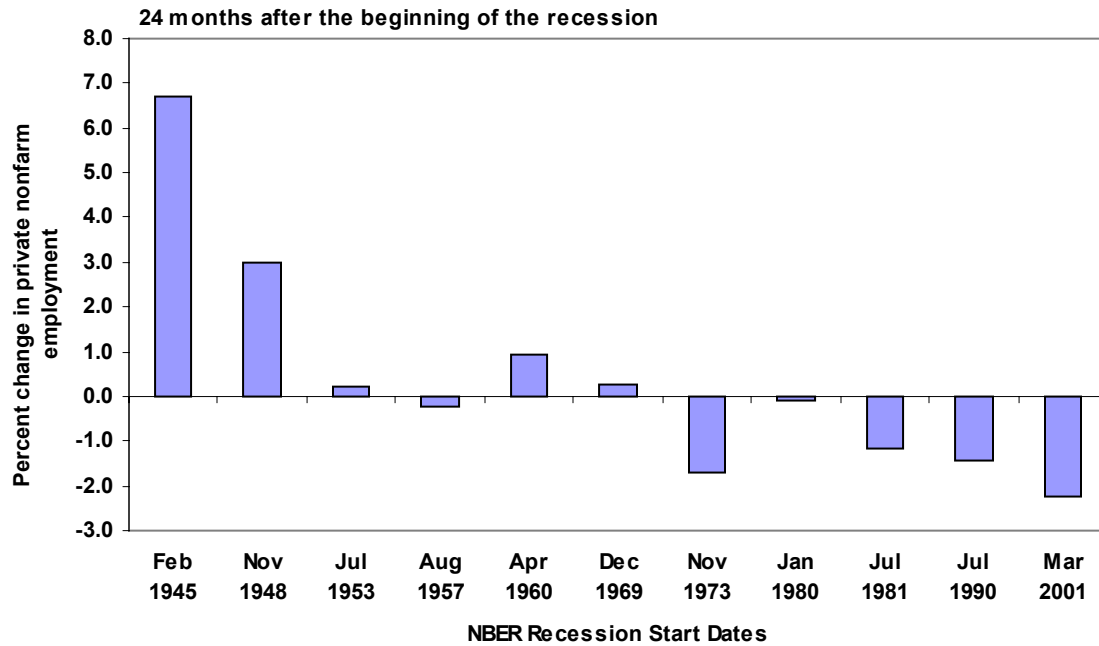
On average, job losses in a recession bottom out after about 15 months and are erased within two years. The persistence of job losses at the two-year mark in this recession is the most severe since the 1930s (**see chart**).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' release of the March employment situation painted a bleak labor market picture. Overall, there are 8.4 million unemployed Americans, and about 4.8 million additional workers who currently want a job but are not counted among the unemployed. Another 4.7 million people work part-time because the economy is so weak. And long-term unemployment remains high, with 1.8 million Americans having been unemployed for more than 26 weeks – that's 21 percent of the unemployed.

“The most immediate goal of economic policy should be to get people back to work as quickly as possible,” said Stark. “The President needs to work with Congress to stimulate the economy by providing aid to the states and another extension of federal unemployment insurance benefits. It is unconscionable that the House and Senate budget resolutions have no provisions for extending temporary UI benefits or restoring assistance to the one million unemployed workers who have exhausted all of their unemployment benefits and are struggling to heat their homes, feed their families, and find new jobs. And yet the budget resolutions provide additional permanent tax breaks for the wealthy—a policy that retards long-term economic growth.”

- more -

## Recovery in Private Sector Jobs is the Slowest Since the 1930s



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor; and National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

*The Joint Economic Committee, established under the Employment Act of 1946, was created by Congress to review economic conditions and to analyze the effectiveness of economic policy.*

- end -