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SELECT COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL  
ECONOMIC STABILIZATION FUNDING

MEMORANDUM

TO: House of Representatives

FROM: Chairman Jim Dunnam

DATE: April 6, 2009

SUBJECT: Unemployment Figures

Yesterday, Dr. William M. Rodgers, a chief economist under former President Bush for the US Department of Labor, appeared on *Meet the Press* and said that there are around 9 million Americans who work part time, all of the time. He said if we figure in the number of those part time workers who are currently unemployed, our national unemployment percentage goes from around 8.5 up to 15 percent.

15 percent unemployment is a staggering statistic, especially considering that unemployment during the Great Depression was around 20 percent, varying by a few points depending on the reference used. During the Great Depression and the deep recessions of the 1970s and early 1980s, respectively, unemployment was highest only after those recessions came to an end and the economy as a whole was already recovering.

On Friday, April 3, Keith Hall, Commissioner of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (the Bureau) released the Bureau's monthly employment report. The report shows that people who are working part time because they cannot find full-time work climbed by 423,000 in March, reaching 9 million.

The Bureau's report also showed that nearly one in every four people who are currently unemployed have been jobless for 27 weeks or more, the highest ratio since mid-1983.

In her 2010-2011 biennial Revenue Estimate, Commissioner Combs said that Texas would lose 111,000 jobs over the course of the first two quarters of 2009. Texas lost over 100,000 jobs in January and February alone. (The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) will release its jobs report for March on April 17.) While Commissioner Combs has not yet revised her jobs estimate for Texas, there are projections that show Texas will lose closer to 300,000 jobs this year.

Today, TWC reported to the Select Committee that Texas' weekly unemployment insurance payout has reached approximately \$74 million. That number was \$64 million about one month ago.