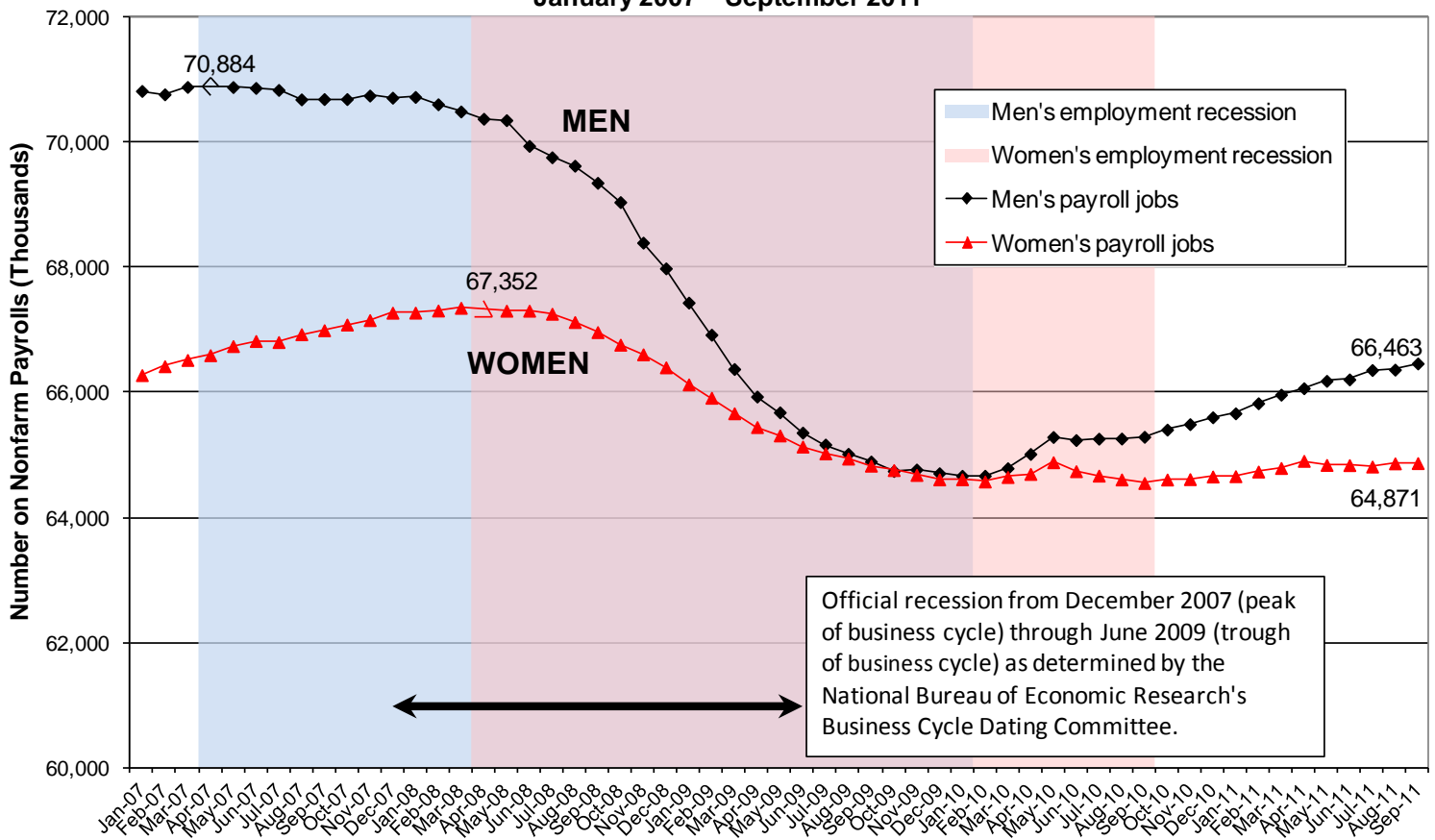


Slow Job Growth in September Points to Need for Federal Help with Job Creation

Monthly Number of Women and Men on Payrolls (Seasonally Adjusted),
January 2007 – September 2011



Source: IWPR analysis of U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (October 7, 2011)

The job gap between women and men has been growing. In September 2011, men gained 99,000 jobs, but women gained only 4,000. In the last year, from September 2010 to September 2011, of the 1.5 million jobs added to payrolls, 318,000 or 21 percent were filled by women and 1,172,000 or 79 percent were filled by men.

Women have regained only 12.2 percent (318,000) of the total jobs they lost in the recession (2.6 million from November 2007 to the trough for women's employment in September 2010, which occurred more than one year after the recession officially ended). The picture looks somewhat better for men, especially if we count only from the beginning of the recession: men have gained 29.5 percent (1.8 million) of the jobs they lost since November 2007 (6.1 million). If we count all the job losses from the prior seven months, dating back to May of 2007, when men's job losses actually began, then men have regained 28.9 percent of the total 6.2 million jobs they lost. Men are recovering at more than twice the speed of women, but the jobs recovery is slow for both men and women. Since October of 2009 when men's and women's total jobs numbers were virtually equal, women have gained 111,000 jobs, whereas men have gained 1,718,000. The gap between women's and men's employment in September is currently 1.6 million.

In the Great Recession, men had 33 months of nearly consecutive job loss and women 'only' 23 months. The number of months of nearly consecutive job loss and the size of the job loss is, however, unprecedented for both men and women (with the exception of the Great Depression of the 1930s).

Why are men doing somewhat better than women at this point in the recession? One reason is that women are a disproportionate share of state and local government; those levels of government are shedding jobs now, and women are losing a disproportionate share of those jobs. For example, from September 2010 to September 2011, the number of government jobs at all levels fell by 289,000 and 172,000 (60 percent) of these had been held by women. These large government job losses erode the gains made in other industries where women also hold many jobs. For example, in September 2011 43,800 jobs were added in health care.

The proposed American Jobs Act (AJA) would help to spur economic growth. It includes important provisions for women and a deficit reduction proposal that requires higher income people to pay more taxes. By calling for the extension of unemployment insurance benefits, the prevention of up to 280,000 teacher layoffs, the renovation of 35,000 schools, investment in transportation infrastructure, and the creation of subsidized employment programs and job training opportunities that could connect many low-income women to work, the AJA would create jobs, and alleviate economic hardship. One prominent economic analyst, Mark Zandi of Moody's Analytics, has estimated that the American Jobs Act "would add 2 percentage points to GDP growth next year, add 1.9 million jobs, and cut the unemployment rate by a percentage point."¹

¹ Zandi, Mark. 2011. "An Analysis of the Obama Jobs Plan." Dismal Scientist. <http://www.economy.com/dismal/article_free.asp?cid=224641&tid=F0851CC1-F571-48DE-A136-B2F622EF6FA4&src=MZ> (accessed on October 7, 2011.)