

2026-2-13

Is the economic boom here?

~~SEO~~
ECO

The Denver Gazette · 13 Feb 2026 · A19 · Washington Examiner

Wednesday's stronger-than-expected job report could be a sign of the economic renaissance President Donald Trump promised, possibly in time to save Republican congressional majorities in November. But such a dramatic political comeback would require an equally significant turnaround in public perceptions of the economy — and that is where skepticism abounds.

On the same day the latest jobs numbers were released, the payroll job count for 2025 was revised downward by 1 million.

Trump used such downward revisions of jobs figures announced under former President Joe Biden to sow doubt about government statistics, sacking the head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for releasing what he called a "rigged" jobs report.

This, plus delays in the release of some numbers due to a pair of government shutdowns, has been used to cast doubt on the Trump-era jobs numbers. Trump had to yank his nomination of Heritage Foundation economist EJ Antoni to become the new BLS commissioner partly because of such distrust.

"US job growth surges in January, but labor market far from turning around," read a Reuters headline on Wednesday.

"Turns out the U.S. economy didn't create half a million jobs last year," stated the headline of another story by the Associated Press the same day. "It was just 181,000."

Similar stories were published, casting doubt on favorable inflation numbers late last year.

"I'm noting the press, including the business press which tends to be less actively partisan, is treating the jobs numbers skeptically, especially given the 2025 revision," observed commentator Erick Erickson on X.

"Top White House officials have started trying to downplay a highly anticipated jobs report set for release on Wednesday, insisting that the U.S. economy remains strong even if the data may ultimately show a fresh slowdown in hiring," the New York Times reported on Tuesday.

Instead, that report showed the economy added 130,000 jobs in January, and the unemployment rate dropped a tenth of a percentage point to 4.3%, causing the White House to shout it from the rooftops.

"Today's blockbuster, expectation-shattering jobs report proves that President Trump's economic agenda continues to pay off," said White House deputy press secretary Kush Desai in a statement.

"GREAT JOBS NUMBERS, FAR GREATER THAN EXPECTED!" Trump exclaimed on Truth Social.

The job gains came following cuts to federal workers and a crackdown on illegal immigration.

Trump and administration officials ranging from Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to trade adviser Peter Navarro have vowed that the economic progress would become visible this year, even if some of them might have been caught off guard by the January numbers.

The White House has been hoping for something like the economic boom that started in then-President Ronald Reagan's first term after inflation was brought under control, which in turn spurred a political recovery that saw Republicans go from losing seats in Congress in 1982 to winning reelection to the presidency in a 49-state landslide in 1984.

Trump's job approval rating on the economy was just 40.5%, according to the RealClearPolitics polling average, while 55.9% disapprove. A Pew Research Center survey published earlier this month found 52% of U.S. adults say Trump's economic policies have made conditions worse, with 28% say he's made things better, and 19% who believe his policies have had no effect.

If those numbers don't improve soon, Republicans risk major losses in the midterm elections. The economy was Trump's best issue for most of his first term, until the pandemic, and a major reason voters returned him to the White House in 2024. Exit polls found 53% trusted Trump more on the economy, while 46% picked former Vice President Kamala Harris, who replaced Biden as the Democratic nominee.

Trump's team is hopeful that Wednesday's numbers are just the first indication that his tax cuts, deregulation, and trade deals are about to improve the economy and public attitudes before voters head to the polls this year.