

# Rise in private payrolls shows stable labor market

Lucia Mutikani  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – U.S. private payrolls posted their largest increase in 15 months in April, pointing to continued labor market stability even as the conflict in the Middle East clouds the economy's outlook.

The labor market remains in a “low-hire, low-fire” state, though economists are warning of downside risks as the U.S.-Israel war with Iran fans inflation. The latest sign of labor market stability in the ADP's national employment report on May 6 bolsters financial market expectations that the Federal Reserve would leave interest rates unchanged into 2027.

“The labor market has been on solid but precarious footing for some time, not exactly growing but also not significantly deteriorating,” said Elizabeth Renter, senior economist at NerdWallet. “Amid ongoing global conflict, the fall-out of a continuing oil shock and continued economic policy uncertainty, it would take more than one strong report on the labor market to signal we're facing a different labor environment.”

Private employment rose by 109,000 jobs last month, the biggest increase since January 2025, after a downwardly revised 61,000 gain in March. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast private employment advancing by 99,000 jobs after a previously reported 62,000 increase in March.

The broad increase in payrolls was led by the education and health services, which added 61,000. Construction employment rose by 10,000. But professional business services shed 8,000 jobs.

The ADP report is jointly developed with the Stanford Digital Economy Lab, and was published ahead of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' more comprehensive and closely watched employment report for April on May 1. It, however, has been a poor predictor of the private



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payrolls estimate by the BLS.

“Actual private payrolls figures have generally been lower than what ADP predicts,” said Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics.

Despite the war disrupting shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and raising commodity prices, there has been no marked pickup in layoffs. Government data on May 5 showed there were 0.95 job openings for every unemployed person in March versus 0.91 in February.

Nonfarm payrolls likely increased by

62,000 jobs in April after rebounding 178,000 in March, a Reuters survey of economists predicted. Private payrolls are forecast to have increased by 75,000 after surging 186,000 in the prior month. The unemployment rate is expected to have held steady at 4.3%.

U.S. job openings, a measure of labor demand, were down 56,000 to 6.87 million by the last day of March, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said in its Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS report. Economists polled by Reuters had fore-

cast 6.835 million unfilled jobs.

Vacancies decreased by 318,000 in professional and business services. There were more job openings in retail, financial activities, health care and social assistance sectors.

Hiring jumped by 655,000 to 5.55 million, the highest level since February 2024. The increase was the largest since May 2020. It spread across retail, transportation, warehousing and utilities, as well as professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality industries.

# Republicans seek \$1B to boost ballroom security

Joey Garrison  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – From the beginning of his push for a new White House ballroom, President Donald Trump has insisted no public money will be used on the massive project.

Trump said on July 31, 2025, that no government dollars would be used after announcing plans for a 90,000-square-foot ballroom on the East Wing he now estimates will cost \$400 million, twice the amount as initially projected.

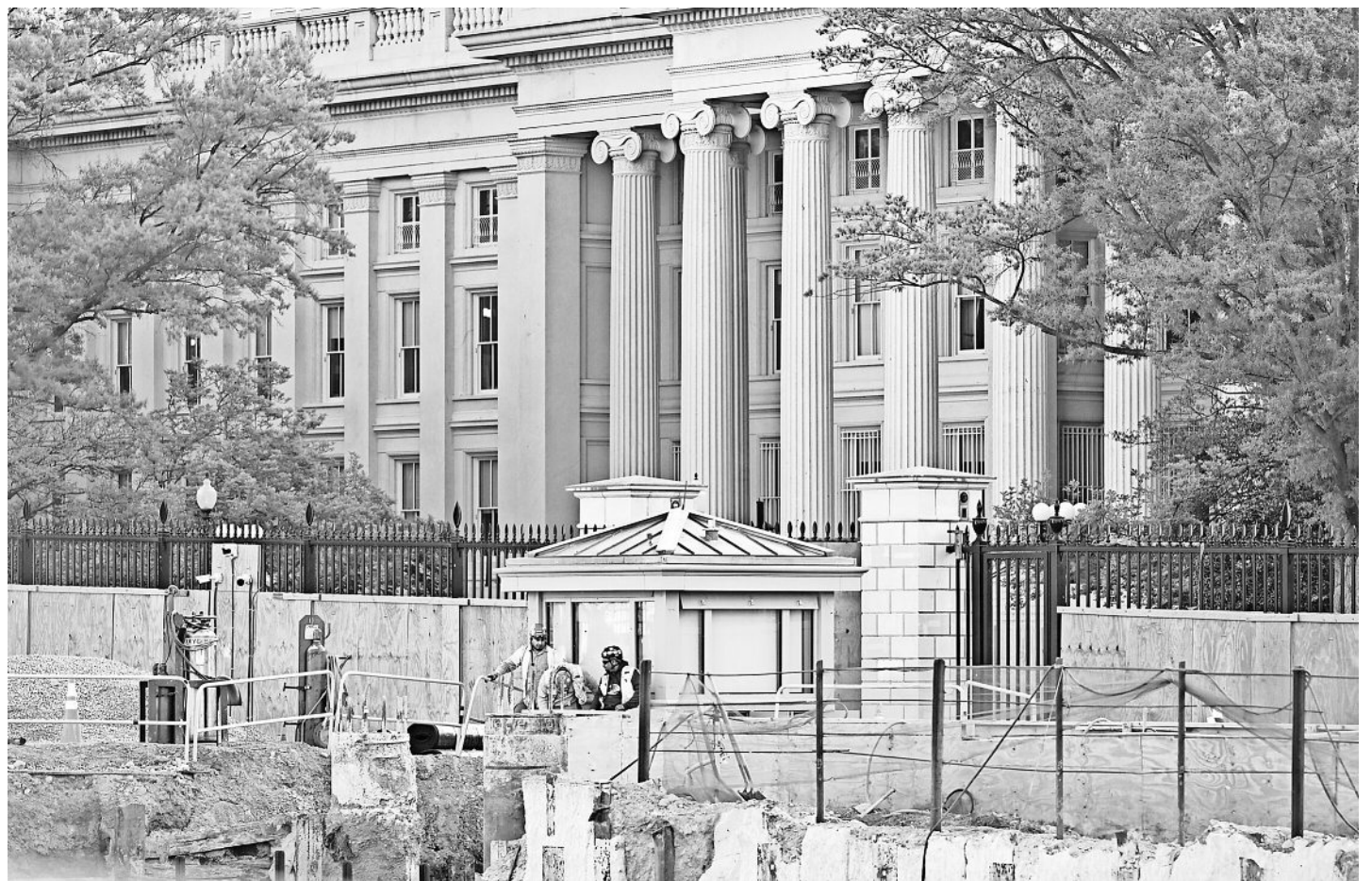
But now, Republicans in Congress are seeking \$1 billion in Secret Service security enhancements as part of the East Wing overhaul, setting up a showdown with Democrats over Trump's ballroom and his commitment to rely on only private money.

Republicans, led by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, inserted the \$1 billion appropriation in an immigration enforcement security bill they are hoping to pass through reconciliation. The legislation states the money would be used for “security adjustments and upgrades, including within the perimeter of the White House Compound, to support enhancements by the United States Secret Service relating to the East Wing Modernization project, including above-ground and below-ground security features.”

The bill says none of the funds can be used on “non-security elements” of the project, a reference to the ballroom itself, including its construction.

The White House said Trump still plans to pay for the ballroom with money raised by private donors. White House spokesman Davis Ingle pointed to the April 25 shooting at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner to defend the budget request.

“The proposal would provide the United States Secret Service with the resources they need to fully and com-



The White House ballroom project led to the unannounced demolition of the East Wing in October.

MATT MCCLAIN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

pletely harden the White House complex, in addition to the many other critical missions for the USSS,” Ingle said.

But Democrats seized on the security request. “Republicans are on a different planet than American families,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-New York, said in a post on X. “Republicans looked at families drowning in bills and decided what they really needed was more raids and a Trump ballroom.”

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, ranking member of the Senate Budget Commit-

tee, said: “At a time when gas prices are rising every day due to Trump's war of choice with Iran and families continue to struggle to buy groceries, Republicans are ignoring the needs of middle-class America and instead funneling money into Trump's ballroom.”

The larger reconciliation bill also includes \$30.7 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, nearly \$3.5 billion to Customs and Border Protection, \$2.5 billion for the Department of Homeland Security and \$1.5 billion for other security efforts.

Trump's ballroom project, which led to the unannounced demolition of the East Wing in October, won approval in April from the National Capital Planning Commission. But the project faces a challenge in court from historic preservationists who have decried the ballroom's size and argued congressional approval is needed.

Above-ground construction has been blocked by one federal judge, then unblocked by a federal appeals court while it considers the case.

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