



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on June 12, 2012

Federal Employment Far Exceeds Private-Sector Job Growth

President Obama's assertion last Friday that "the private sector is doing fine" has drawn heated criticism from his opponents, as media outlets and the Romney campaign have pounced at the opportunity to exploit the President's "out-of-touch" view toward the U.S. economy.

In response to the flurry of criticism, Press Secretary Jay Carney [said](#) Monday that the media has been skewing Obama's remarks, and then lectured reporters about taking the President's words out of context. "Certainly, we believe that you all ought to do your jobs and report on content," Carney averred. "Our general position is we're for truthful, factual, accurate reporting that's done in context."

Obama made his controversial statement during a White House news conference Friday, [asserting](#), in part:

The truth of the matter is that, as I said, we've created 4.3 million jobs over the last 27 months, over 800,000 just this year alone. The private sector is doing fine. Where we're seeing weaknesses in our economy have to do with state and local government — oftentimes, cuts initiated by governors or mayors who are not getting the kind of help that they have in the past from the federal government and who don't have the same kind of flexibility as the federal government in dealing with fewer revenues coming in.

The Romney campaign swiftly pounced on the President's contentious narrative. "Is he really that out of touch? I think he's defining what it means to be detached and out of touch with the American people," Romney told a crowd of supporters in Council Bluffs, Iowa. "Has there ever been an American president who is so far from reality?"

Romney added that 23 million Americans are unemployed, underemployed, or have altogether abandoned the workforce. Further, he noted, the economy grew a mere 1.9 percent in the first quarter, home foreclosures remain at record numbers, and median family incomes have dropped precipitously under Obama's tenure.

"For the president of the United States to stand up and say that the private sector is doing fine is going to go down in history as an extraordinary miscalculation and misunderstanding by a president who is out of touch, and we're going to take back this country and get America working again," Romney affirmed.

Sparring with CNN host Candy Crowley on the network's "State of the Union" program, adviser David Axelrod attempted to defuse Obama's Friday gaffe. But after asking Axelrod three times whether he





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agreed with the President's "private sector" remark, Crowley had yet to receive a definitive answer.

"The private sector — we need to accelerate job creation in the private sector," Axelrod [said](#) initially. "One of the ways that we can do that is putting teachers and firefighters and police back to work, because those are good, middle-class jobs."

"That's the public sector," Crowley shot back.

But "that'll help accelerate recovery," Axelrod retorted. After asking a third time whether he agreed with the President's statement about the private sector, Crowley received the following response: "It's certainly doing better than the public sector."

However, according to [Investors.com](#), a quick peek at payroll data shows the purported contention is, simply put, a blatant falsehood:

Private-sector jobs are still down by 4.6 million, or 4%, from January 2008, when overall employment peaked. Meanwhile government jobs are down just 407,000, or 1.8%. Federal employment actually is 225,000 jobs above its January 2008 level, an 11.4% increase. That's right, up 11.4%.

Private payrolls have been trending higher in the last couple of years while government has been shedding staff. But that's because government did not cut jobs right away. Overall government employment didn't peak until April 2009, 16 months after the recession started. It didn't fall below their January 2008 level until September 2010.

All in all, the recession was a boon for federal employment. While Obama's 2009 stimulus law produced little fruit for the private job market, it funneled massive sums of funding to state and local governments. Of course, the money only postponed the fiscal calamities that forced states and cities to slash spending.

John Lott, writing for [FoxNews.com](#), hones in on the President's allegation that the private sector is experiencing a significant boost in job growth. Lott cites Obama's argument that 4.3 million jobs have been created over the last 27 months. "But Obama ignores how private-sector job creation during this recovery compares to other past ones," Lott [explains](#). "The total actual number of private-sector jobs has grown by 2.8% during the 'recovery' — the average for recoveries since 1970 is 8%, and 11% after severe recessions."

Moreover, the growth appears even more ghastly when compared to how many jobs were lost in the first place. After 36 months into the recovery, the private sector has yet to even make up half the jobs lost during the recession, not to mention the fact there are 7.6 million more working age Americans than before the recession began.

"What about the 4.2 million that were lost between when Obama became president and February 2010?" Lott continues. "The 'growth' just replaces what was lost during the first part of his administration. Let alone the 8.8 million private sector jobs that were lost between when the recession started."

In summing up the debacle, Rick Newman at [U.S. News](#) [purports](#) that, as a whole, Americans are vanishing from the labor force, and that Obama's claim that private-sector growth far surpasses public-sector growth is utterly inaccurate:

The percentage of adults who have a job or are looking for one is in alarming decline, with the labor force participation rate dropping from 66.2 percent at the start of 2008 to 63.8 percent today.



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That's back to levels from the 1970s. The trend probably means that a lot of people have given up looking for work, and will end up dependent on public assistance funded by a shrinking base of taxpayers. That's hardly a sign of a vibrant private sector.

Photos: Federal employees create traffic jams in D.C.; [Finding a job in the employment section of the newspaper](#) via Shutterstock



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