



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 14, 2019

Blue-collar Employment Thriving Under Trump — Hits 50-year High

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Recent news articles reinforce reports that have been carried by major-media outlets for over a year: Employment levels in blue-collar jobs have been growing at their fastest rate in more than 30 years, with most of the growth taking place since Donald Trump took office.

The Investment Watch blog ran a report on October 12 that was headlined “Under Trump, employment for the non-college-educated is the best it’s been in 50 years.” The article noted: “Blue-collar professionals such as plumbers and mechanics are earning more than the average salary for white-collar jobs — and they don’t require a traditional college degree, according to a recent Bloomberg report.”

That statement is particularly significant in the face of multiple reports in the news of late about the burden of college debt. CNBC reported last year that more than 44 million Americans collectively hold nearly \$1.5 trillion in student debt. When they graduate, the average student loan borrower has \$37,172 in student loans, a \$20,000 increase from 13 years ago.

The article noted that though college graduates still earn more than non-graduates, avoiding student debt could make trade schools more appealing. Many trade programs are covered in part by employers, and state-sponsored programs in Michigan and Georgia offer trade degrees tuition-free.

This phenomenon was analyzed by reporters at *Issues & Insights* last May.

The *Issues & Insights* writers found from analyzing the data that 1.2 million goods-producing jobs were created in the U.S. economy since Trump took office — more than twice as many as were created during the last 27 months of the Obama administration.

During Obama’s last 27 months in office, the economy created 109,000 manufacturing jobs, compared with 470,000 created from January 2017 through May 2019 under Trump. Jobs in the durable-goods manufacturing industry declined during this time under Obama.

Blue-collar workers are seeing stronger wage gains as well, noted the report, with weekly wages for goods-producing jobs up \$70 under Trump compared with \$39 under Obama.

During May, the Labor Department reported that job openings had surged by 346,000 to a seasonally adjusted 7.5 million in March. Vacancies in the construction industry climbed by 73,000, and there were 87,000 job openings in the transportation, warehousing, and utilities sectors.

An [article posted by The New American](#) in August noted that younger Americans are questioning the



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traditional model for achieving career success that involves attending a major four-year college right out of high school, getting good grades, landing a job at a good company, and working one's way up in the company.

The article cited a study commissioned by TD Ameritrade and conducted by The Harris Poll during the first two weeks of March that seemed to indicate that the American Dream may soon have a new model that looks surprisingly like an older model: well-paid, solvent blue-collar workers whose children may see college as a luxury.

The article noted one positive consequence of this trend, however: "Given that college is where many young people adopt liberal ideologies, perhaps this shifting trend is a move in the right direction for America."

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Related article:

[Recent Study: Nearly Half of Young Americans See College as Superfluous](#)

Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.



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