



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 4, 2010

## Is the Census Bureau Double Counting Jobs?

When John Crudele quoted numerous Census Bureau workers about being hired, fired, and then rehired repeatedly, he called them “horror stories.” James O’Keefe, notorious and fearless investigative reporter, calls it part of a trend: “These days, Americans know that people in backrooms are taking advantage of their power. And they’re fed up with it.”

In a [recent article](#), this writer found wanting Vice President Joe Biden’s recent prediction that job growth for April and May would be 250,000 to 500,000:



It’s fair, then, to ask the Vice President: Where is the evidence? And if such evidence is lacking, then what is his logic behind making such a prediction? Since the stimulus packages have not worked so far, what would lead him to think that all of a sudden they will start working? And what about the timing? If the March employment numbers clearly don’t reflect reality in the economy, why would April or May numbers be any more realistic? Is this just wishful thinking on his part? Or fantasy? Or is it just a willingness to play along with the continued deliberate distortions coming from the administration?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics [announced](#) on May 7 that April’s job growth was 290,000, and according to [MarketWatch](#) on June 3, job growth for May is estimated to be 513,000 — *with 400,000 of those new jobs coming from the Census Bureau!* If Crudele’s summary of workers being hired, fired, and rehired is extended across the approximately 650,000 temporary workers hired by the bureau, and if many of them are double counted in the BLS report as a new hire – a “new job” is created whenever someone is hired to work as little as one hour in a month — then the question remains: Is the economy is strong as it looks, or only as strong as the government wants it to look? Crudele’s article provides examples of workers’ stories:

- I was hired four times by the Census Bureau: spring 2009 for address canvassing; fall 2009 for general quarters verification; late winter 2010 as a quality assurance clerk; and, spring 2010 [as an] enumerator non-response follow-up....
- I was hired four times, counting last year and this....
- Everything you reported is absolutely true. I was fired three times and rehired. I earned more going to training classes than (working). Several classmates didn’t get any work after completing training.
- It’s not much better in Florida. Our first day of training was a total joke. The supposed crew leader knew nothing. She didn’t even open the manual to prep herself. We spent four hours signing six pieces of paper, one of which we signed on the day of the initial testing. The nightmare didn’t end when we got to the field. No work was available so we would sit in a meeting waiting for work for hours, which went on our timesheet.



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- I have personally experienced the very same thing (in Missouri)) and have said from the beginning that this is strictly political and for jobs numbers.

Doing some hypothetical math brings one to the possible conclusion that many if not most of those jobs numbers in April and May are phony. This attitude prevails elsewhere in the Bureau. O'Keefe just [released a video](#) on YouTube of his experience as a Census Bureau worker in Bergen County, New Jersey.

In an [article](#), O'Keefe added these comments:

On April 27, 2010, I got a job with the United States Census Bureau in New Jersey. With a hidden camera, I caught four Census supervisors encouraging enumerators to falsify information on their time sheets. Over the course of two days of training, I was paid for four hours of work I never did. I was told to take a 70 minute lunch break, was given an hour of travel time to drive 10 minutes, and was told to leave work at 3:30pm. I resigned prior to doing any data collection but confronted Census supervisors who assured me, "no one is going to be auditing that [at] that level," and "nobody is going to be questioning it except for you." Another Census supervisor only said he'd adjust my pay after I gave him a letter recanting my hours.

It is premature to do any more than draw some tentative possible conclusions. But the temptation to inflate numbers, whether for hours worked, or workers hired, for political and personal benefit, is often overwhelming, especially when one is working for the government and thinks no one is watching.



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