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Obama's Economy – A Decline For Americans

While President Barack Obama's claims of employment increasing are accurate, there is much more information that adds to the grim picture of America's actual employment situation

By L. Mendez

Since 2009, when Obama took office, the number of employed Americans has increased by 9.9 million. However, 14.6 million actually have left the labor force during Obama's presidency.

According to the latest numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, from January 2009 through December 2016, there were 9,959,000 more Americans 16 years and over who gained employment. However, there were 14,573,000 more Americans 16 years and over who were not in the labor force. Meaning, they did not have a job and had not looked for one in the past four weeks.

While the unemployment rate declined from 7.8% to 4.7%, the number of people who were out of work but had stopped looking for work had actually increased.

The labor force participation rate declined from 65.7% to 62.7%. In September of 2015, it dropped to 62.4%. This was the lowest level seen since 1977. During Obama's tenure, minorities, women, and veterans have also been discouraged in the workforce.

The black American labor force participation rate declined from 63.2% in January 2009 to 61.8% in December 2016. Therefore, while 2,811,000 more black Americans were employed during Obama's time in office, there were 1,949,000 that left the labor force.

During the same time frame, only 4,311,000 women 16 years and over who became employed, while 7,756,000 left the workforce. The participation rate for women

dropped from 59.4% to 56.7%.

Employment for veterans also declined under the Obama administration. While there were 11,496,000 veterans 18 years and over who were employed when Obama took office, this number declined to 10,009,000 in December 2016. 384,000 more veterans left the labor force during Obama's presidency. Jim Clifton, who is chairman and CEO of Gallup, said, "If you, a family member, or anyone is unemployed and has subsequently given up on finding a job—if you are so hopelessly out of work that you've stopped looking over the past four weeks—the Department of Labor doesn't count you as unemployed."

"The official rate is misleading," Gallup continued. Alfredo Ortiz, president and CEO of the Job Creators Network, said, "There are systematic problems in the U.S. job market that aren't clearly visible from looking at the general unemployment numbers. By reducing the regulatory burden placed on small business job creators the labor force participation can return to healthy levels." Some advisors say that the only way to get the "real" unemployment rate is to look towards the U-6 measure. This method includes those who have been discouraged in an effort to gauge more accurately the amount of Americans who are out of work. When using the U-6, the real rate stood at 14.2% and has since dropped to 9.2% in December 2016.