

Workforce and Social Trends

The employment situation continues to improve with the unemployment rate trending down, although employment growth slowed recently, as shown in the following figure:

Chart 1. Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, May 2014 – May 2016

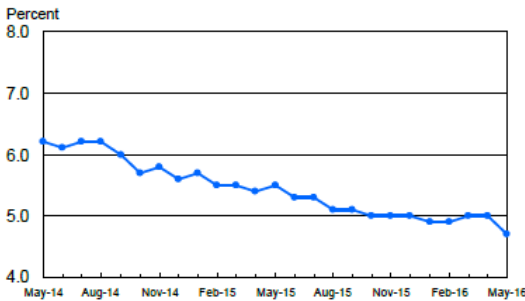
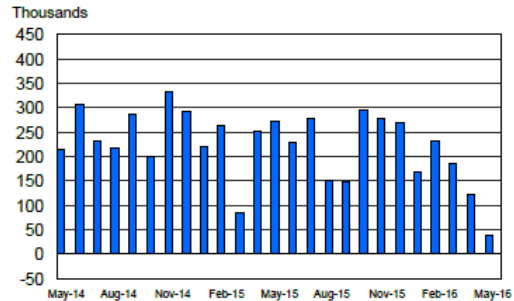


Chart 2. Nonfarm payroll employment over-the-month change, seasonally adjusted, May 2014 – May 2016



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, News Release, The Employment Situation - May 2016, June 3, 2016.

The job openings rate continues to recover from the recession, as shown in the next figure:

Chart 1. Job openings rate, seasonally adjusted, April 2013 - April 2016

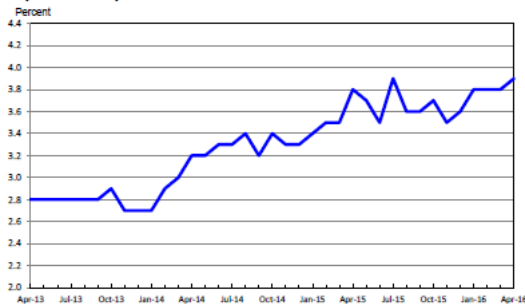
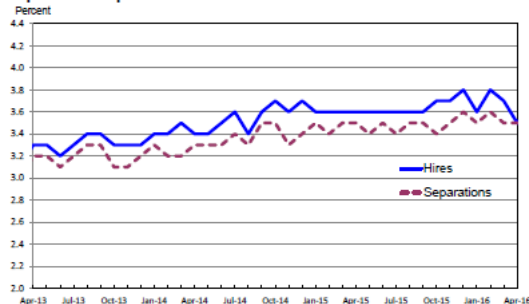
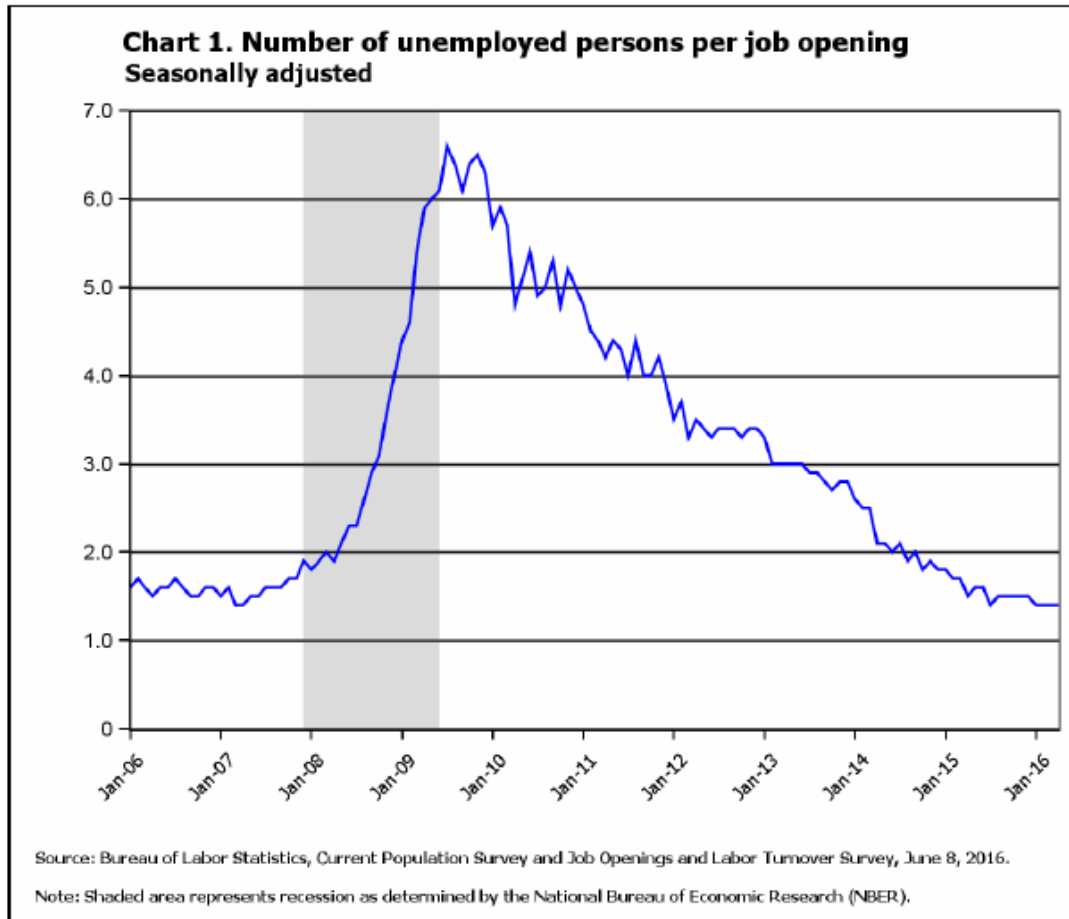


Chart 2. Hires and total separations rates, seasonally adjusted, April 2013 - April 2016



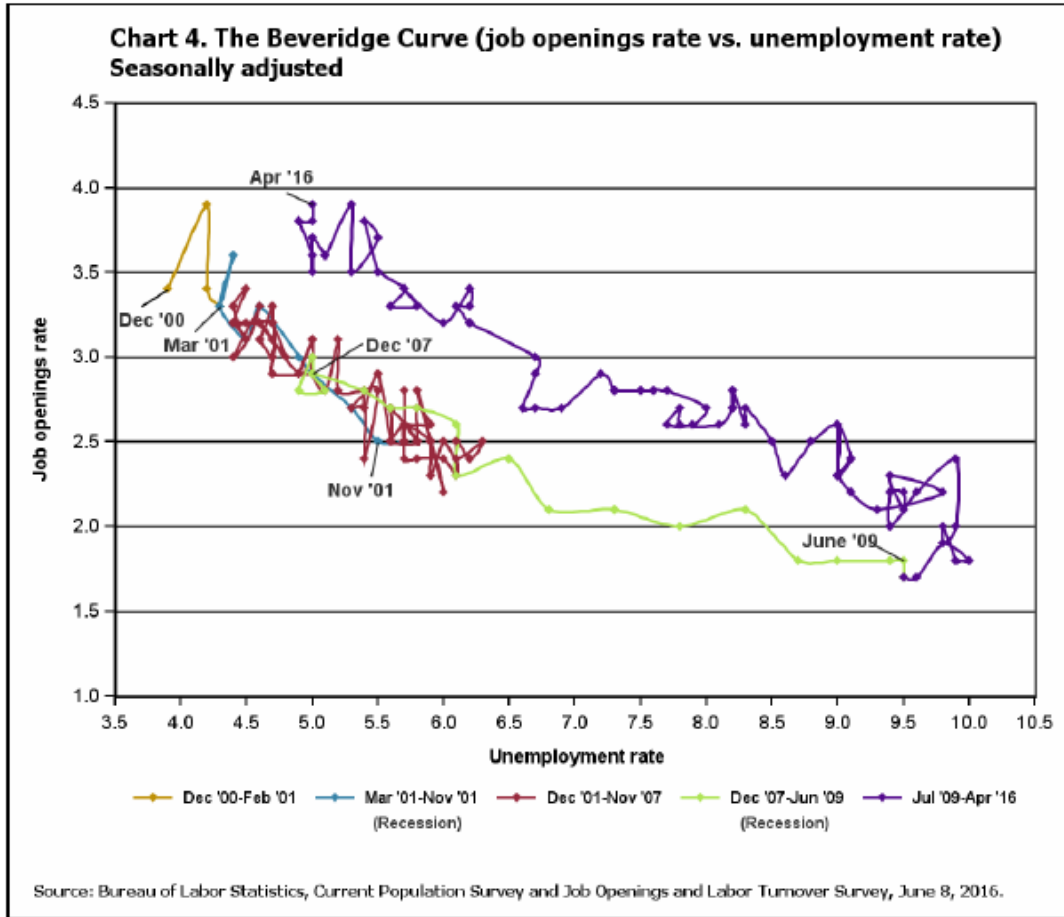
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, News Release, Job Openings and Labor Turnover – April 2016, June 8, 2016.

This recovery is also reflected in a continued reduction in the number of unemployed persons per job opening, as shown in the next figure:



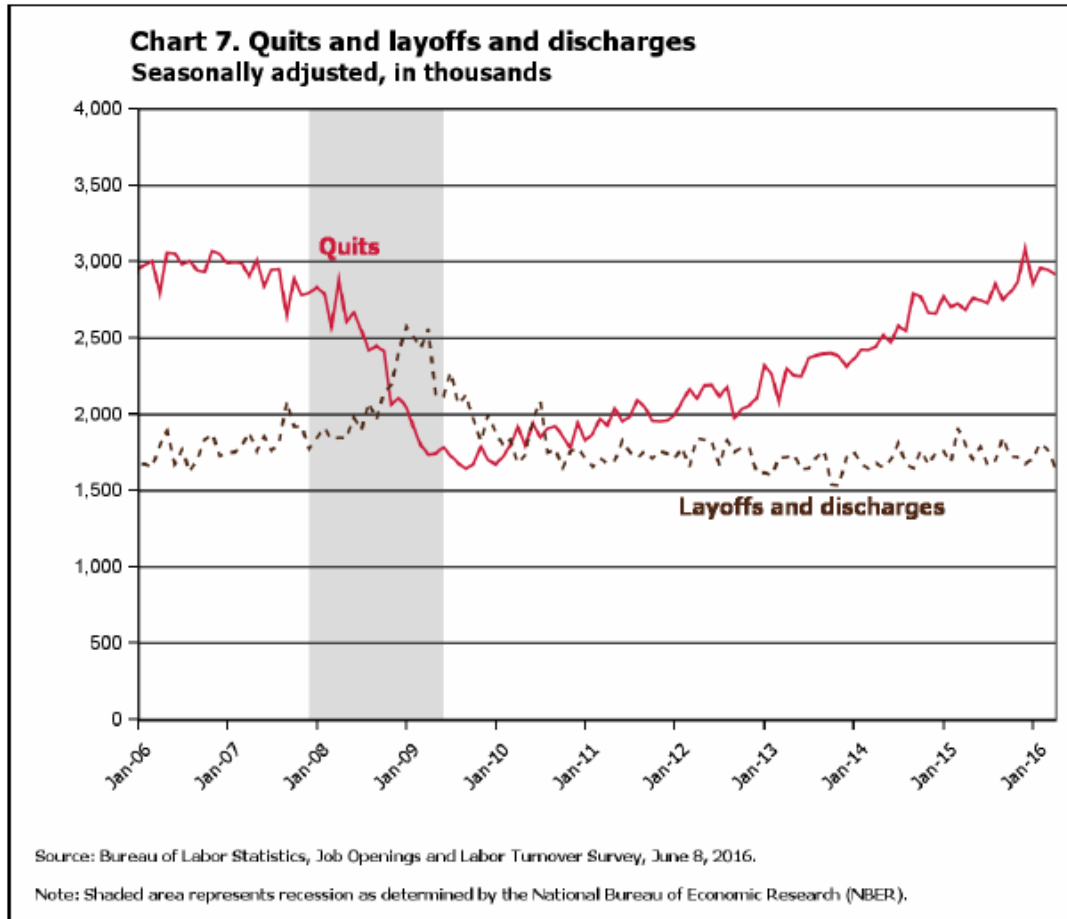
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey Highlights, April 2016, June 8, 2016.

The next figure suggests there may have been structural changes to employment. The current unemployment rate near 5% is higher than would be expected for the current job openings rate. An unemployment rate of about 4% would reflect past job openings rate history:



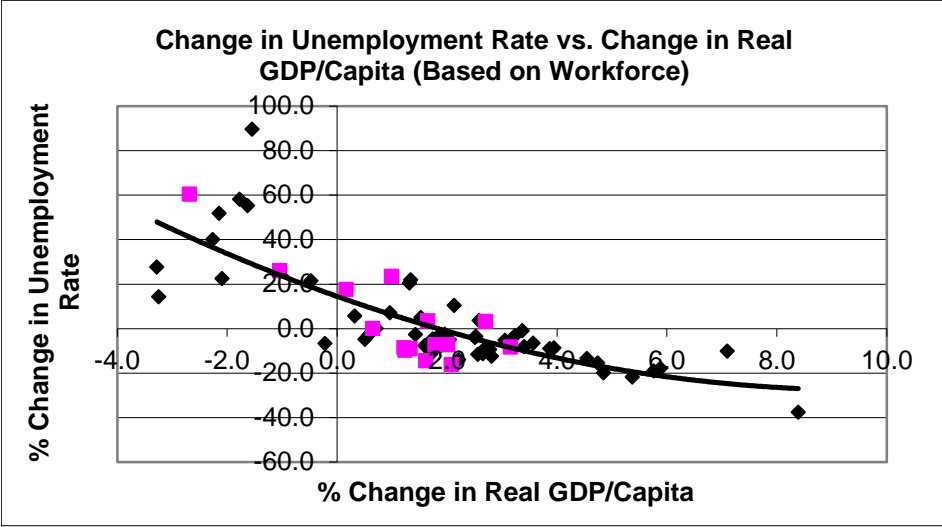
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey Highlights, April 2016, June 8, 2016.

The level of dissatisfaction that people feel with conventional employment is reflected in the growing, high level of quits (which are self initiated) as shown in the next figure:



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey Highlights, April 2016, June 8, 2016.

The relationship between changing unemployment rate and changes in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, which we first observed in *Affiliation in the Workplace* for the period from 1947 to 2000 in the United States, has continued to hold. The following figure shows that more recent 2001 to 2015 data (the square, purple data points using real GDP expressed in 2009 dollars) follow the same trend as the original 1947 to 2000 data (the diamond, black data points with the associated trend line, also using real GDP expressed in 2009 dollars).



Unfortunately our social and economic structure in the United States, with a weak safety net and economic segregation that has increased substantially over the past thirty years, is leading to growing economic inequality with many people disenfranchised. This is a major concern. We are placed eighteenth out of twenty-one countries on a number of social and economic measures as shown in the following table:

TABLE 4. Rankings for 21 Countries

Country	Labor Markets	Poverty	Safety Net	Income Inequality	Overall
Australia (AU)	10	6	18	11	13
Canada (CA)	6	8	15	9	9 (tie)
Czech Republic (CZ)	7	11	16	6	11
Denmark (DK)	13	5	4	5	4
Estonia (EE)	16	20	21	15	20
Finland (FI)	15	7	6	8	8
France (FR)	5	12	2	14	7
Germany (DE)	1	15	3	12	6
Greece (GR)	20	18	14	21	21
Iceland (IS)	3	1	19	1	2 (tie)
Ireland (IE)	21	16	1	19	15 (tie)
Italy (IT)	18	17	9	16	17
Luxembourg (LU)	4	2	11	13	5
Netherlands (NL)	2	3	5	4	1
Norway (NO)	9	4	8	3	2 (tie)
Poland (PL)	14	21	12	10	15 (tie)
Slovak Republic (SK)	8	14	17	2	12
Slovenia (SI)	11	13	7	7	9 (tie)
Spain (ES)	19	19	13	17	19
United Kingdom (UK)	12	10	10	18	14
United States (US)	17	9	20	20	18

Note: The ranks presented here were secured by (a) converting the scores on the indicators in Table 3 to country rankings, (b) averaging across the rankings comprising each domain and converting these averages to domain-specific rankings, and (c) averaging across these domain-specific rankings to produce an overall country ranking.

Source:

Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, Pathways A Magazine on Poverty, Inequality and Social Policy, Special Issue 2016, State of the Union: The Poverty and Inequality Report 2016.

It is a reminder about the importance of supporting those candidates in our upcoming elections who advocate for all in our society, not just the rich and powerful.