

# The New York Times

## U.S. adds 103,000 jobs; rate holds steady at 9.1%

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As an increasing number of economists have warned in recent weeks of a double dip back into recession, employers added 103,000 jobs in September, staving off the bleakest forecasts for now.

The unemployment rate for September was the same as August, 9.1 percent.

With President Obama continuing to press a balky Congress to pass his jobs bill, the Labor Department's monthly snapshot highlighted the challenges for an administration faced with an economy that has struggled to deliver significant employment growth since the recovery started more than two years ago.

September's number came after a month in which employers added a revised 57,000 and on the heels of other disappointing data about consumer confidence and the housing market. And economists have grown increasingly concerned about a ballooning European debt crisis that could send ripples across the Atlantic.

In a news conference on Thursday, the president urged Congress to act to prevent weaker growth and more job losses. “There are too many people hurting in this country for us to do nothing,” Mr. Obama said. “And the economy is just too fragile for us to let politics get in the way of action.”

Despite all the talk of another recession, some recent economic indicators actually paint a slightly better picture of the economy. Auto sales rose close to 10 percent in September to their highest level in five months, and sales at chain stores also rose last month. But the focus of political attention remains job growth.

Economists suggested that employers still have little incentive to add many jobs. “Given the complete lack of clarity as to what the economic outlook will be and the uncertainty about what’s going on in Europe and the political paralysis in Washington,” said Bernard Baumohl, chief economist at **the Economic Outlook Group**, “there is not much of an economic justification for employers to suddenly ramp up hiring.”

Allen L. Sinai, chief global economist at Decision Economics, a consulting firm, said he supported the president’s jobs plan and estimated that it could create about 500,000 to 600,000 new jobs. But he said that even companies that are profitable are hesitant to part with their cash to hire people. “C.E.O.’s are paid to grow shareholder value,” said. “They are not paid to hire people if demand isn’t there and if they can substitute machines for people. That’s a no-brainer for the people who run companies.”