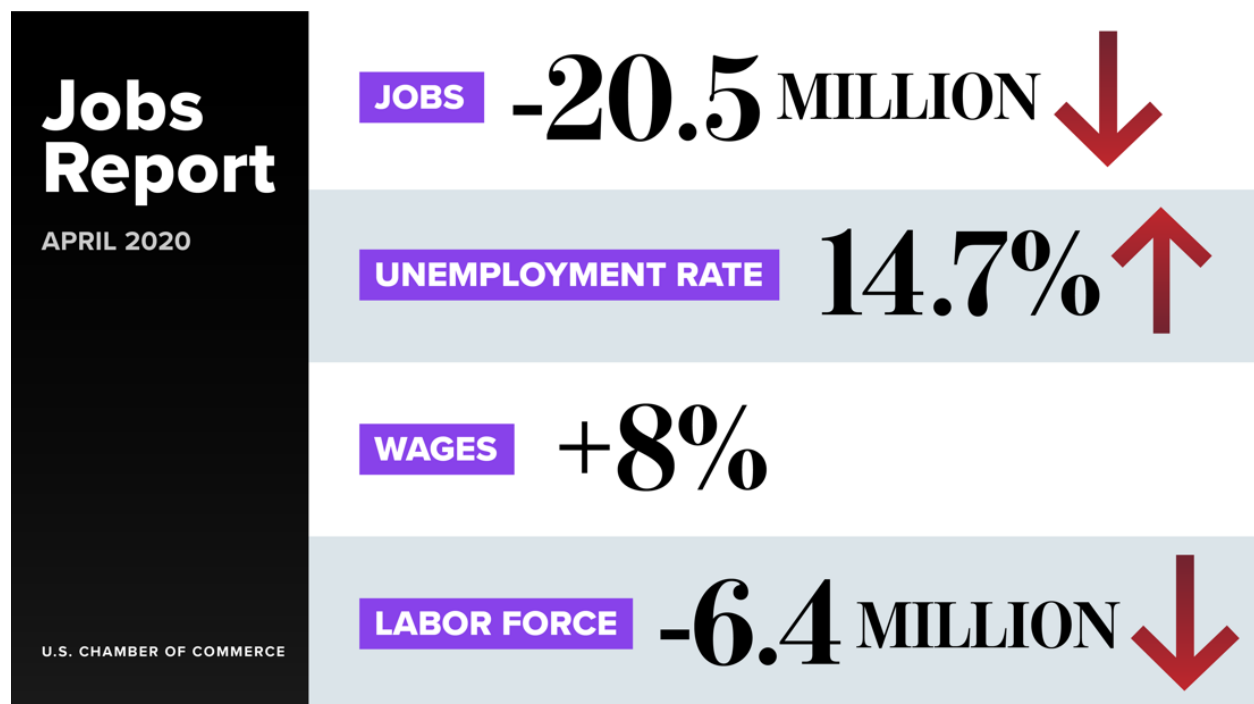


Unemployment Soars to 14.7%

Jobs week concluded today with more bad news. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), 20.5 million Americans lost their jobs in April. The unemployment rate shot up to 14.7%.

BLS reports that “in April, the unemployment rate increased by 10.3 percentage points to 14.7 percent. This is the highest rate and the largest over-the-month increase in the history of the series (back to January 1948).”



Furthermore, the decline from March to April is the largest one month drop in the history of the series and brought total employment to its lowest level since February 2011.

And lastly, to add insult to injury, BLS noted that some persons who missed work due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 were misclassified as “employed but not at work” and should have been classified as “unemployed on temporary layoff.” If these 7.5 million people were considered unemployed, “the resulting unemployment rate for April would be 19.2 percent.” Hopefully these workers will go back to work quickly once their employers re-open.

These are hard numbers to see. The hope going forward is that as states begin to slowly reopen, the job market will begin to heal and many of those unemployed today

will head back to work. That may still be a few months away though. May's jobs report could be similarly painful given recent unemployment claims.

On our blog, Above the Fold, we took a deeper dive into what [sectors of the economy](#) were most affected.

–Curtis Dubay, Senior Economist, U.S. Chamber of Commerce