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Sunday, February 28, 2016

What Is The Real Rate of Unemployment in the USA? (17.77%)

What Is The Real Rate of Unemployment in the USA?
by Angela Smith, HEAL Coordinator

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the unemployment rate in the United States in January, 2016 was 4.9% of the population 16 years old and older. In January of 2015, the unemployment rate was 5.7%. (Source: <http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000>) It is these statistics one usually hears quoted by news and media outlets. But, is it accurate?

First, what percentage of the US population is retired? 13% of the U.S. population is 65 or older. (Source: <http://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/articles/2012/01/09/65-and-older-population-soars>) 15% of that 13% continue to work after reaching retirement age. (Source: <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/laborfor/Working-Beyond-Retirement-Age.pdf>). That means 1.95% of retirement age Americans continue to work after reaching the age of retirement. And, that approximately 11% are retired and do not work at all. That would place the actual unemployment rate for residents 16 years old and older at the very least at 11%, not the BLS statistic provided in the first paragraph.

But, it may be unfair to some to count those in retirement. So, retired folks that are not currently working are not included in the unemployment rate calculations below.

Second, How many US residents filed income tax returns in 2014? The statistics are not yet available for 2015 or 2016 as it is February, 2016 and the due date for filing for 2015 isn't until this coming April. The total number of federal income tax returns in 2014 appears to be 130,989,957. (Source:

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HEAL is an egalitarian network of activists self-empowered to plan events, create change, and make the world a better place for all life. Our goals include the liberation of humans, nonhuman animals, and the earth! We work in cooperation with like-minded organizations that put compassion in action!

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<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-soi/14inweek21.xls>) The number of people claiming to earn between \$0-\$25,000 per year is 53,118,680. In 2015, the federal government reported that the poverty level was at \$12,331 for individual annual income. (Source: <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/thresh15.xls>) 33,340,984 working Americans earn \$15,000 or less per year. The category provided for \$15,000 gives a range of \$10,000-\$15,000 and the above number includes that range and all income ranges below the poverty threshold.

And, how many adults are there in the US? According to the US Census Bureau, there are 245,201,076 adults in the US. And, with 26,972,118 (11% of US population representing non-working people of retirement age) removed we are left with 218,228,958 that appear to be adults of working age in the United States.

How many of those adults are disabled? 56.7 million people are reportedly disabled in the United States. (Source: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html>) So, that would leave us with 161,528,958 adults of working age. Of those, how many are incarcerated? The Bureau of Justice Statistics last performed a census on all state and federal incarcerated adults in 2005 and that number was 1,430,208 total. (Source: <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=530>) Other figures show 1 in 110 adults are in prison in the US. (Source: <https://www.aclu.org/prison-crisis>). And, that suggests the current prison population is approximately 2,229,101. So, even though many inmates are working at their facilities, we will remove this number as well from the overall calculation. This leaves us with 159,299,857 adults of working age in the US excluding retirees, prisoners, and the disabled.

So, we have 130,989,957 individuals filing income tax returns of 159,299,857 total adults seemingly eligible for employment. If you subtract, 130,989,957 from 159,299,857 you get 28,309,900. And, 28,309,900 is 17.77% unemployment. To be fair, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the unemployment rate was 5.7% in December of 2014. But, there is still a 12% discrepancy here.

If you think I've got the math wrong on this, please e-mail me at angela@heal-online.org and explain where I am mistaken. I believe the correct and most accurate unemployment rate is 17.77% and is not 4.9%.

And, if you add 28,309,900 to working poor living at or below the poverty line, you get 61,650,884 unemployed and/or living in poverty. And, that means at least 25.14% of the US population is dealing with financial insecurity. This is why we need to have a peaceful revolution at the ballot box and get legislators who

understand the human rights crisis we are facing in the US. Vote responsibly!

Posted by **HEAL** at **10:11 PM**

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