

MORE AMERICANS STRUGGLING TO FIND WORK

Nearly 15 million workers are unemployed, under-employed in part-time jobs, or have given up the hope of finding a job. And with proposed changes to overtime laws, and government sanctioned out-sourcing of jobs offshore, the situation continues to look bleak. Since January 2001, more than 2.9 million private-sector jobs and 2.8 million manufacturing jobs have disappeared in the U.S., according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and AFL-CIO reports.

"President Bush's millionaire tax cuts, were supposed to create jobs, but workers in virtually every sector - including education - are dealing with layoffs and cutbacks," said New York State United Teachers Executive Vice President Alan Lubin.

The president's "Jobs and Growth Plan" was promoted as a way to create 5.5 million new jobs by the end of this year - more than 300,000 per month since July 2003. It is falling woefully short.

The plan had not created 300,000 jobs even in the entire six month period since the last round of cuts took effect, said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "He's more than 1.6 million jobs short of this promise," said Sweeney. "In December alone, we lost another 26,000 manufacturing jobs."

Bureau of Labor Statistics reports show that since the president took office, nearly 200,000 private sector jobs and 135,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in New York State alone.

Workers are set to lose again under Bush's agenda to strip overtime pay. The U.S. Department of Labor is scheduled to make change to the Fair Labor Standards Act this month that would eliminate million of workers from overtime eligibility. The Economic Policy Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank, reported that if the rules go into effect, more than 449,000 workers may lose the added income.

As thousands of workers are facing the economic reality of having their jobs shipped overseas to a cheaper work force, Gregory Mankiw, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, said the trend is "just a new way of doing international trade." Other federal officials said outsourcing would ultimately be good for the economy.

Ask Rochester

"Outsourcing jobs is good for the economy?" said Lubin. "Just ask the people of Rochester if Kodak's 5,000 layoffs are good for the economy, or ask our members in Schenectady if G.E.'s moving its turbine operation to China has been good for the local economy. Ask Syracusans how they feel about Carrier's outsourcing of jobs."

President Bush, in his State of the Union address in January 2004 suggested Americans need to be better educated to get better-paying jobs. In New York, however, options are limited for workers as the only real job growth reported is in the retail industry and other low-wage employers.

"On average, industries gaining jobs in New York State pay workers \$20,500, or 38 percent less than the industries losing jobs in the two years since the national recession officially ended," said the New York-based Fiscal Policy Institute in a January report. During the recession, New York lost jobs at almost twice the national rate, the FPI reported.

"The president said his tax cuts were supposed to spur job growth," said Lubin. "They may have - but not in this country."

- Clarisse Butler