

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

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ROMNEY STRIKES OUT ON JOB LOSS NUMBERS

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Based on information supplied by the Republican National Committee, Mitt Romney stated yesterday (April 10) that 92 percent of the job losses since President Obama took office in January 2009 have fallen on women. The specific job loss numbers cited are 57,000 for men and 683,000 for women.

By "job losses" it is not clear if the RNC and Romney mean that a total of 740,000 fewer persons are employed or 740,000 more are unemployed.

A look at the numbers taken directly from the Bureau of Labor Statistics *Current Population Survey*, which is the only source of national labor force data by gender, will help address that question.

From January 2009 through March 2012 on a seasonally adjusted basis (SA), employment among men increased by 151,000 and unemployment decreased by 234,000. Over the same period SA employment among women fell by 304,000 and unemployment rose 858,000.

The numbers are substantially different on a not seasonally adjusted basis (NSA). For men over this period NSA climbed by 744,000 and unemployment dipped by 639,000. For women, NSA employment increased by 232,000 at the same time NSA unemployment jumped by 533,000.

Thus, whether seasonally adjusted or not, the BLS data tell us unambiguously that among men employment has increased since January 2009 and unemployment has decreased.

Whether job loss is measured in terms of employment or unemployment, it follows that Romney's job loss number of 57,000 for men simply is wide of the mark in direction and amount.

For women, the adjusted and unadjusted data on unemployment also are unambiguous but unlike the men, joblessness for women has not fallen, it has risen. However, the trend in employment among women is upward using NSA data but downward using SA data.

Measuring job loss in terms of unemployment, Romney got the direction among women right but his 683,000 is wrong. Measured in terms of employment, there is confirmation in the adjusted data that Romney got the direction right, but no confirmation in the unadjusted data.

If Romney were playing baseball rather than running for the GOP presidential nomination, we'd recommend more time in the batting cage or a different batting coach.

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