



How the U.S. Economy Is Doing, as Told by UPS' Seasonal Jobs Numbers

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September 15, 2015

UPS Inc. says it will hire up to 95,000 seasonal workers this holiday season, the same as last year.

The international shipping company said Tuesday that it is looking to add between 90,000 and 95,000 full-time and part-time seasonal workers, primarily package handlers, drivers and driver-helpers. The number of additional workers UPS plans to hire is the same number of anticipated new hires last year, according to CNN.

But according to Dan Mitchell, an economist for the libertarian Cato Institute, the number of extra employees one of the world's largest shipping company needs in order to fulfill holiday shipping orders reveals much more than just that.

"The fact that we have a stagnant employment situation as measured by UPS seasonal hiring, you could say that's not a good reflection of the economy," Mitchell told TheBlaze on Tuesday. "We're not expecting more packages to be shipped. We're not expecting more consumer spending, which presumably is a reflection of the fact that consumer income isn't climbing in a robust fashion."

However, as Mitchell also pointed out, those same "dismal conclusions" could also be drawn just by looking at other data.

While President Barack Obama and his supporters have repeatedly pointed to the unemployment, now the lowest in seven years, Mitchell suggested the labor force participation rate provides a more accurate picture, showing that that number is the lowest it's been in nearly 40 years.

Mitchell also pointed to government data released in 2014 showing the median U.S. household income at \$51,939 in 2013, up from \$51,759 the year before. U.S. median income was \$50,054 in 2011, a 1.5 percent drop from 2010.

Mitchell concluded that this "anemic" growth in recent years, as measured by these data and reinforced by the new UPS seasonal jobs numbers, is just one more indication of what Americans might be able to expect in the coming years.

"Those are much much broader pieces of data but then this UPS job information certainly is yet another sign that we have this, as some people are calling it, the new normal," Mitchell said.

A UPS spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment from TheBlaze.