



**FIRST FRIDAY BLUES  
BY JULIANNE MALVEAUX**

The bureau of labor statistics issues a report, The employment situation, on the first Friday of every month ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)). For the past several months, the report has contained no surprises. We know the jobless situation is getting worse, and we only wait for their statistical confirmation of our pain.

This month the unemployment rate rose to 9.8 percent. More than 200,00 jobs were shed, but more than that, more and more people are shrugging the labor market off, feeling that they can't find work. The 9.8 percent for everyone translates into 9 percent for whites, 12.7 percent for Latinos, and 15.4 percent for African Americans. But the reported data are only part of the fact. According to BLS, the real overall unemployment rate is more like 17 percent. Using the same algorithm, the rate for African Americans is more like 27 percent.

Translation. One in six Americans is jobless. More than one in four African Americans cannot find work. Everyone else in the universe has been bailed out, especially the bankers and mercenaries of our world. What about the people, the ones who need their job to buy food, to pay for school supplies, to sustain families? These are the folk who have been ignored by the so-called economic recovery, the folks who have been shrugged off by the notion that the economy is in recovery.

Recovery doesn't mean much when we know that the unemployment rate is a lagging indicator of recovery. In other words, we can see some small bounce in the stock market, or even in GDP growth, but until people are put back to work, the economy will not soar. Until people are put back to work, they will not spend. Until people are put back to work, we are stagnant.

There are ways to put people back to work. We can simply make jobs, make jobs. That means we can create public sector employment opportunities. We can put people to work in libraries and in childcare centers. We can have people administer the swine flu shots and provide public health information. We can offer government subsidized after school care. Yes, the tea party crowd will go nuts, but so what. From where I sit, they are already nuts. Bottom line -- we need to create jobs so that we can jump start this economy.