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For Immediate Release:

**New Jersey's Economy Heated Up in 2016, Outperforming
National Private Sector Job Growth**

60,800 Private Sector Jobs Added, More Than Four Times Preliminary Estimates

TRENTON, N.J., March 13, 2017 – New Jersey private sector employment increased by 60,800 jobs in 2016, the largest single annual gain since 2000, according to data released by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) during its Annual Benchmark process. The job growth is four times higher than previously estimated by the BLS preliminary monthly surveys throughout 2016, and the new data shows private sector and total nonfarm job growth in New Jersey outpaced the national rate over the year from Jan. 2016 to Jan. 2017.

The benchmark report underscored a steady trend of private sector job growth in New Jersey over the past seven years. Since the recessionary low point of private sector employment in February 2010, the Garden State has added 313,100 private sector jobs, 65,000 more jobs than pre-recession levels. New Jersey has regained all total nonfarm and private sector jobs lost in the Great Recession.

The job growth has continued into 2017, according to preliminary monthly data released by the BLS showing the addition of 14,600 new private sector jobs in January and a drop in the unemployment rate to 4.6 percent, which is below the national average of 4.8 percent.

"We always thought that job growth in 2016 was stronger than was being reported. Now that the benchmark revisions are out we know that it was four times greater. We expect strong job growth to continue through 2017 and 2018 as the country and the State enter a renewed period of more vigorous economic growth," said James Wooster, Chief Economist for the New Jersey Department of the Treasury. "We further expect job growth in the Garden State to be supplemented by improvements in the quality of jobs as people continue to shift from part-time to full-time employment and to climb the career ladder more rapidly."

Annual Benchmark revisions also showed New Jersey's unemployment rate averaged 5 percent in 2016, down from 5.8 percent in 2015 and on par with the national average of 4.9 percent for 2016. The January preliminary estimates also showed New Jersey's labor force participation rate, which measures the number

of people employed or actively seeking work, continuing to surpass the national rate, 63.5 percent to 62.9 percent.

BENCHMARK REVISIONS FOR 2016

The BLS's benchmark process, a required annual review and adjustment of previously released state-by-state employment data, re-anchors monthly, sample-based survey estimates to full-universe counts of employment, primarily derived from records of the unemployment insurance tax system. The results of the latest annual benchmarking adjustment process—conducted by BLS each year at this time for every state—show that over the December 2015 – December 2016 period, six of nine major private industry sectors of the New Jersey economy added jobs.

Job gains were recorded in education and health services (+20,000), trade, transportation, and utilities (+19,900), professional and business services (+14,700), leisure and hospitality (+6,400), financial activities (+2,700), and other services (+600). Sectors that recorded job losses over the year include information (-1,600), construction (-1,000), and manufacturing (-900).

JANUARY 2017 ESTIMATES

Preliminary nonfarm wage and salary estimates for January 2017 show an increase in total nonfarm employment by 12,600 jobs over the month, reaching a seasonally-adjusted level of 4,116,300. All of the gain was recorded in the private sector of the state's economy (+14,600). As indicated above, the state's unemployment rate also ticked lower by 0.1 percentage point to 4.6 percent due to both a rise in the number of employed and a decline in unemployed New Jersey residents.

Over the month, six of the nine major private sector industries in the state showed job growth, including professional and business services (+5,600), construction (+3,800), manufacturing (+2,500), leisure and hospitality (+2,500), trade, transportation and utilities (+1,000), and financial activities (+400). The education and health services (-700) and other services (-500) sectors recorded job losses, while the information sector recorded no change. Public sector jobs were lower by 2,000 over the month, driven by losses at the state (-1,700) and local (-400) levels of government.

Preliminary BLS data for February 2017 will be released on March 23, 2017.

PRESS TABLES

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