HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Testimony prepared for the

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Insular Affairs
August 2007

Dear Chairwoman Christensen and Honorable Subcommittee Members:

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands (HANMI) offers this testimony for your consideration regarding HR 3079. Commencing in 1992 with our testimony before the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, and continuing thereafter through numerous hearings, including September 1999 when we appeared before this committee, HANMI has detailed our position in favor of retaining local control over immigration and our foreign work force.

As a remote group of islands, we need continued flexibility and local knowledge in planning for our economic future. Unlike the U.S. mainland, the island economy of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is experiencing unprecedented decline due to external forces that are largely beyond our control.

Today, our tourism industry -- once a raging success story -- is challenged not only to recover losses of the past decade, but also to become perhaps the sole major industry of the future. Full recovery requires a stable and supportive business climate. Quite to the contrary, we believe that HR 3079 would cause hardship to our community by:

- ***Forcing the exit and replacement of a large and necessary segment of our workforce***
- ***Limiting access to our tourists at a time when we most need to diversify and bring commerce into our islands***
- ***Increasing the costs of doing business, while offering no mitigating incentives to ensure our private sector can survive***

Why do we feel so strongly about this? This legislation was crafted based on outdated information rather than our current economic conditions. Further study of the prospective impact on our current economic state is vital to avoid aggravating our already fragile economy. Without sufficient study and a plan, there is little chance of an economic recovery in the near future. Put simply: failing to plan means planning to fail.

We cannot help but compare this scenario to what is happening in nearby Guam. The federal government desires to increase its military base, which will greatly affect the economy and future of Guam. Before any moves are made, the federal government is undertaking a detailed and lengthy environmental study to assess the impact of a military build up. This thorough study is being done precisely so that a proper plan can be put in place to minimize and mitigate any negative impacts on the community and prepare for proper transitions.

Ironically, just while Guam is undergoing studies, it would seem that there is little such care given to our smaller islands. We are about to experience a "Perfect Storm" with existing economic challenges compounded by the massive changes that are proposed in this bill -- yet Congress is not taking the time to properly study the effects. There is something gravely wrong with this scenario.

We acknowledge that the bill may be well intentioned to increase security of our borders and bring the CNMI into the protection of the U.S. system. We do share the concern of the U.S. regarding the need to protect our country from terrorism.

We also acknowledge that the CNMI needs help. There are numerous problems in our economy that are beyond our control due to external factors. It may be time for a greater presence and financial assistance by the federal government. But without a well-conceived plan, we are taking a great risk that more businesses may fail.

Under this bill, an immigration and labor system completely new to our islands would be administered by five Presidential cabinet members and their agencies headquartered nearly half a world away. These agencies have never had a significant presence in the Northern Marianas. Therefore it is difficult to imagine that they would have sufficient understanding and flexibility to meet the unique needs of our community.

We urge members of U.S. Congress to conduct a census and surveys of our business community and our people. We must study the effects of this bill before passing a law that would damage our economy. It is only through study that certain inevitable impacts can be truly understood.

If a proper study were conducted, you would see that we do not have enough local residents to provide all of the specialized skills and language capabilities necessary to operate existing businesses without foreign labor. It therefore makes no sense to pass an overly rigid bill that would call for the complete phase out of our foreign work force, even after 10 years, without the flexibility to reassess future needs.

The Northern Marianas have always been challenged to be self-sustaining with a small, indigenous population. This situation has not changed and in fact, may have gotten worse. With rapidly rising costs of living, including utility costs, fuel costs, and basic food costs, many of our best and brightest citizens are leaving. This exodus of qualified local workers places an even greater strain on the scarcity of the pool of local employees. It is current challenges like these that must be considered in the needed study that should shape a more responsible bill. Even with the inevitable down-sizing of our government, our citizen population is still too small to run essential government services across three islands and still have enough people to provide an adequate work force for our private sector.

Of equal importance to our future is the recognition that we must diversify our tourist markets. As small islands near the heart of Asia, we have unique opportunities to diversify. This diversification would not appear to be permissible under the current bureaucracy and restrictions of U.S. Immigration procedures.

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Challenges Facing our Tourism Industry

Approximately 21 years ago, the economic growth of the Northern Mariana Islands was one of the highest of any American state or possession. Resorts and smaller hotels were built in the late 1980's and early 90's, and visitor arrivals brought prosperity to the islands. The Northern Marianas welcomed 728,621 tourists at its peak in 1997. These visitors were almost exclusively from Japan and Korea. Last year in FY 2006, our tourism industry struggled with just 443,812 visitors. This year due to further losses in air capacity from Japan, we are expected to drop to less than 400,000 visitors.

Because we were so dependent upon Japanese tourists and investment, quite naturally the early golden days ended with the bursting of the Japanese "bubble" economy in the mid-1990's. The Asian economic crisis in both Japan and Korea followed, and a series of other natural and manmade calamities also took their toll.

When Japan's and Korea's economies declined, hotel owners who were saddled with debt began to sell their properties. From approximately 2002 to the present, many hotels changed hands. The turnovers in the CNMI's hotel industry were not unique, but were repeated in Guam and Hawaii. Like the Marianas, Hawaii's original resorts were heavily owned by the Japanese, and like our islands, Hawaii's tourism industry deteriorated prior to the entry of new investors.

Hotel buyouts in Hawaii took place from the late nineties up to 2002, just a few years before Japanese hotels in Guam and the CNMI also began selling. Hawaii today is enjoying a boom in tourism due to massive turnover at over $5 Billion in hotel sales, renovations, and a destination enhancement program by the government. The transformation in Hawaii has happened at a faster pace than the Marianas, due to the islands' proximity to the U.S. mainland and the influx of American and Canadian tourists and investors. The Northern Mariana Islands, by contrast, see few American tourists except inter-island travelers from Guam and an occasional military ship's visit.

In the Northern Marianas, the only other major industry -- garment manufacturing -- has declined by nearly 60% over the past two years. With the increase in the minimum wage that was passed by U.S. Congress earlier this year, many expect we will completely lose the industry in 2008. When this happens, the full weight of generating the islands' revenues will fall on tourism.

The sudden pullout of Japan Airlines in 2005 has been one of the most difficult challenges our industry has ever had to overcome. In the same year, we also lost Continental Airlines service from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Northwest Airlines picked up some of the routes from Japan, but this did not completely make up the gap in lost air seats. Since that time, Northwest's service has seen ever-changing schedules, and now the downsizing of their planes to more fuel efficient models. While this may help to eventually stabilize their service, unfortunately it has cost the CNMI dearly in terms of visitor numbers.

In September, we will lose a further 130 seats per day as Northwest changes its plane. We fully expect a major tourist decline to last at least until late December, when the airline will start a new flight from Osaka. Many hotels and tourism operators are bracing for perhaps the worst period in our industry's history.

The air service crisis has led tourism officials to join together to learn much more about the business of the airlines. An international air service consultant was hired by the CNMI government, and after frank and open discussions with existing carriers and dozens of other airlines operating in the Asian-Pacific region, we learned that we are a “low yield” destination that is also suffering because of small economies of scale, intense competition for air slots out of Narita airport in Japan, and high costs of aviation fuel. Absent a government subsidy of essential air service, our entire economy is now at the mercy of our air carriers.

About the Hotel Industry of the CNMI

HANMI members are all located on Saipan and represent 3,018 of the 3,394 total hotel rooms that are open for business on Saipan. Some 100 rooms are currently “moth-balled” due to a lack of business, while 182 more rooms have recently been converted to apartments. The island of Tinian has 452 hotel rooms, of which 42 are closed. Rota has 250 rooms, with 60 closed at this time.

Hotel occupancy in the past three months has averaged only 52%. For reference, the average break even point for most hotels is estimated to be in the 70% range. In 2007, average hotel room rates for HANMI members hovered at $90, following more than $60 M in renovations and improvements that have been made in recent years on Saipan alone. For comparison purposes, Guam’s average room rate is near $110, while Hawaii surpassed the $160 mark. (Please see Appendix I for HANMI Average Rates and Occupancies from 1992 to 2006.)

Tinian’s tourism industry has survived thus far due to privately chartered flights from China, which provide the majority of visitors to the island’s one resort hotel and several locally-owned small hotels. Tinian received 64,083 tourists in 2006. Without Chinese tourists, the island’s economy would likely collapse.

Our smallest inhabited island of Rota has been the hardest hit by the loss of air service, resulting in hotel occupancies from a frightening zero to 10% on any given day. Sadly, the island’s major village now resembles a ghost town.

The Northern Marianas compete directly with Asian tropical destinations including the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Maldives, Palau, and Bali, Indonesia, where the cost of labor is low and service standards are high. Our islands also compete with Guam and Hawaii, which are hubs of air service and shipping for the region. Both Guam and Hawaii have benefited from billions of dollars of investment by the U.S. military. By comparison, a large portion of land on our island of Tinian has been held by the U.S. military for many years, but with absolutely no investment.

Conditions of doing business in the Northern Mariana Islands are vastly different than in Guam and Hawaii, due to inadequate infrastructure and a much smaller population. Our hotels have had to invest millions of dollars in their own power and water-making systems. In the CNMI these investments are a necessary cost of doing business, requiring capital outlays that could otherwise be spent on marketing, business enhancements and employee development.

Employment Challenges and Concerns

If the CNMI’s immigration authority is taken away and our guest worker program is to be phased out, we have grave concerns about the hardships that could be caused by reduced access -- and even a phase out -- of our valued employees from overseas. Members of the Hotel Association feel it is unrealistic to expect the tourism industry to completely phase out foreign workers.

In total, our hotels employed 1,959 people as of June 2007, of which 32% were local residents. We are hiring more local residents each year, but turnover must be done gradually to avoid business disruption. Increased employment of local residents requires training and tourism education we do not currently have on island. Again, it is more difficult to find potential local qualified resident candidates as many are leaving the islands for greener pastures on the U.S. mainland.

The hotels provide a wide range of benefits and employee assistance programs, as well as training and development to create a sense of community and build morale among our multi-cultural staffs. But despite these efforts, we have seen that there are certain jobs for which the indigenous community consistently has shown little or no interest. This is evidenced by the high number of foreign workers in housekeeping, maintenance, and most food and beverage positions. These positions roughly equal the 60+% of the jobs held by foreign workers in our hotels.

For culinary arts, no training is currently available and many of our chefs are recruited from Asian countries to meet the tastes of our hotel guests. The ability to recruit highly skilled chefs from foreign countries is seen as one of our few competitive advantages.

The CNMI's resort hotels have recently invested in the development of luxury spas. However, indigenous residents will generally not apply for jobs as spa therapists due to a general shyness in serving guests. Therefore, most of the personnel working in luxury spas today are recruited from Bali, Thailand and the Philippines.

Despite our challenges, we are proud of the progress that our industry has made in hiring local residents. Successful career paths have been established and proven in the ever-increasing number of local residents that have joined hotel management teams. Currently all of the resort hotels have local citizens in human resources management. With networks in the community, these professionals are better equipped today than ever to hire and mentor other residents.

HANMI members have a good record of treatment of both foreign and local employees. In the mid-1990's, our association initiated an inter-hotel committee for human resources of the hotel industry to regularly join together to share ideas and training. The expansion of this committee 10 years ago resulted in the founding of the CNMI chapter of the U.S. national organization, the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM).

To help ensure we provide safe work places, in 2005 HANMI members entered into a voluntary partnership agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor's OSHA Division out of Region IX, San Francisco. This program provides for voluntary inspections, annual conferences and joint cooperation in ensuring safe and healthy working conditions.

An ongoing challenge is the fact that our islands simply do not have any specialized education necessary to grow local employment in tourism. As one example, although the Korean market is the second largest tourism market for the CNMI today, there are no Korean language classes available.

Without the flexibility to retain a certain number of our employees from overseas, this industry will not survive. We will clearly not be able to provide the service level that our guests expect. If we lose our competitiveness as a tourist destination, eventually more businesses will close and even some of the best and brightest local workers will lose their jobs.

Further, the CNMI has come a long way in addressing the labor concerns that have plagued the image of the islands in the national media. Our CNMI Department of Labor has taken great strides in substantively tackling reports of labor complaints by the non-resident workforce. While there is always room for improvement, our current conditions are far safer than the sinister images that have been sensationalized in the media.

Specific Labor Concerns of HR 3079

Section 6(e)(2) of the bill would authorize foreign workers already lawfully present in the CNMI to continue to remain only up to two years after the transition program's effective date. This will negatively impact our hotels as there is yet no regulation in place to for renewal of employment authorizations to remain in the CNMI once that period expires. Without any regulations yet established, there is no way to determine how stringent or costly this would be for our tourism industry to retain such workers thereafter.

Transitional Workers. Sec. 103(d) provides for the entry of aliens into the CNMI as nonimmigrant workers. However, such entry shall be determined at the sole discretion of the Secretary of Homeland Security, which would be charged with establishing, administering, and enforcing a system for allocating and determining the number, terms, and conditions of permits to be issued to prospective employers. Moreover, this system would provide for a reduction in allocation of permits to zero by December 31, 2017. As discussed above, we do not believe that our industry could ever completely phase out its foreign work force.

Subsection (5)(A) would authorize foreign workers to transfer between employers without advance permission of the employee's current or prior employer. This provisions appears contrary to H.R. 3079's intent to assist that employers could secure needed workers if employers could not expect to retain the workers they hired in the first place.

The members of HANMI must also voice our opposition to the bill's plan to convert the status of long-term foreign workers who have remained continuously in the Commonwealth for more than 5 years to immigrant status. This has regrettably become a highly emotional issue in the islands, one that has created significant morale problems in our workforce today. This is also one of the provisions in the bill that has the greatest potential to cause the uncertainty and expense for our businesses. It is a proposal that should not be carried through without thorough study.

We believe that the outcome of the proposed changes of immigration status for foreign workers would be that many would choose to leave the Commonwealth to find higher paying jobs in Guam and the U.S. mainland. This would cause a major disruption in our industry as we would have no means to immediately replace large numbers of people, especially with our dwindling available local workforce.

For foreign workers who would not qualify for a change in status, the bill and its transition period leaves many questions about rising costs. In our weakened economic state, most businesses could not afford the legal expenses, fees and lengthy approval process under the U.S. system of work visas. Once again, these issues should be discussed in detail and an economic study completed before Congress votes on this bill.

The Need for Diversification of our Tourist Markets

A critical reason why HANMI supports continued local control over immigration is the need for flexibility to diversify our tourist markets. It is recognized that Japan and Korea will always be major source markets for our islands, but we must keep the doors open for other nationalities in order to lessen our dependence on any one market. We share great concern about change to our immigration system because the U.S. does not currently recognize countries we have invested in for a decade, namely China and Russia.

Diversification will protect our island economy from an unhealthy dependence upon only one or two markets – or one or two air carriers that could make or break us at any given time. Islands in the Caribbean are fortunate to be able to attract tourists from the U.S. mainland and Europe; Southeast Asian destinations can rely on Europe and many other Asian countries, while the Northern Marianas is investing and tapping into a number of Asian countries within a short flying distance.

Even before the loss of JAL, tourism industry stakeholders identified the need to invest in the most promising new markets in our region. Diversification is critically important in light of the vulnerability of island economies such as ours.

While the bill states that it will consider special CNMI-only tourist visas, we have many questions about how this would be implemented. There is great uncertainty over the potential costs, lead time and approvals involved with dealing with U.S. embassies overseas. We question whether such a program could be anywhere near as efficient and as the program we now have in place under the care of the local government.

Our Russian Tourism Market

Since 1998, Russian tourists have become a lucrative market for the islands, as these guests stay for long periods of time. The Japanese and Korean markets stay for only 3 nights, while it is not uncommon for wealthy Russian tourists traveling with their children to stay for up to 3 weeks. These visitors come to our islands to avoid bitterly cold weather in Russia and to enjoy a taste of American life on the closest tropical island to their country. Many of these guests travel on business class fares via connecting flights from Korea and Japan, which helps our air carriers.

Russian families spend a great deal on dining, patronizing all resort hotel services including kids' clubs and spas. They spread money throughout our economy when they buy retail goods, and enjoy a wide variety of the optional tours available in the islands.

Marketing efforts to Russian tourists have largely been developed through the initiative and investment of Saipan's resort hotels. Today many of our resorts have invested in marketing to and serving the Russian market.

In the year 2006, there were just over 1,500 Russian tourists who came to the Northern Marianas, resulting in estimated sales of 31,500 room nights. In this year, we hope to attract 3,000.

The shortest travel time from Russia is only 7 hours or roughly less time than it takes to travel from the CNMI to Hawaii. This makes our islands a viable destination for Russian tourists. If we convert to a U.S. immigration system and Russian tourists are required to fly for many hours to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow to apply for a visa to the CNMI, we would likely lose all of our Russian tourists overnight.

China Tourism Market

Another bright spot on the horizon for the recovery of the CNMI's tourism industry is the China market. We believe that retaining the CNMI's privilege of local control of immigration and our Approved Destination Status with China, which is an essential element to growing this new market.

As recently stated by the general manager of a resort hotel on Saipan, "Being where we are geographically, we cannot survive without a China strategy. It is a different world. In the future, we have to find a way to open these markets." For the CNMI, it only makes sense for our local tourist industry to have a China strategy to capitalize on the rapid economic growth of this nearby country, which is only a 4 to 5 hour non-stop flight away.

Since 2002 when a hotel on Tinian first took the initiative to charter flights from Guangzhou, the Northern Marianas have grown this market slowly and carefully with a selective visitor entry permit (VEP) designed to control numbers, qualify visitors, and guarantee their exit prior to allowing entry into the islands.

In December 2004, following several years of effort, former Governor Juan Babauta signed an agreement with Chinese officials in Beijing to grant the CNMI Approved Destination Status. ADS allows the CNMI to legally promote itself as a recognized tourist destination in China, an honor we share with more than 100 other countries. More than half of the world -- including Australia, Europe and many other Western countries -- currently have this coveted status.

China has already surpassed the number of outbound tourists from Japan and is now the largest tourist market in the world, with more than 36 Million people traveling overseas in 2006. As a result, there is probably no major tourist destination in the world today that does not have a China marketing plan. The Northern Marianas have a major advantage in attracting this market due to our close proximity, direct non-stop flight service and locally controlled visa.

Guam officials have visited China numerous times, in the hopes of welcoming tourists. As early as 2003, Hawaii conducted a comprehensive study of the China market and its potential for the state. Hawaii has since set up an office in China and has been marketing heavily in preparation for a "green light" for Chinese tourists to visit. San Francisco and Nevada have also set up offices in China. In 2005, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger led his first trade mission to China, while the states of Florida and Texas were the first U.S. destinations to exhibit at Beijing's International Travel and Tourism Market in 2006. The state of Georgia also sent tourism officials to China in the year 2005, in anticipation of opening tourism and trade offices.

Just like other tourists, Chinese families come to the CNMI to enjoy the beautiful clean environment, golf, marine sports and other optional tours. While the Chinese may be second to Japanese travelers in terms of the total amount they spend on trips, they have begun to out-rank the Japanese in how much they spend on shopping.

Over the years to date, the CNMI has welcomed more than 334,000 Chinese tourists to Tinian and Saipan, bringing millions of dollars into our economy. In FY 2006, the arrival figures grew modestly to 38,385.

The CNMI eventually targets to build arrivals from China to 150,000 tourists per year according to the Marianas Visitors Authority (revised target announced in June 2007). The CNMI currently benefits from six direct, non-stop chartered flights from Shanghai, Guangzhou and Beijing. It is our hope that we can continue this growth through a gradual build up of flights from the most modern and affluent cities in China.

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To summarize, the Northern Mariana Islands today are in a pivotal moment in our economic history. We have never been more economically challenged. We believe that for U.S. Congress to force rapid change without sufficient local input and a sound plan would cause havoc and almost certain collapse of many local companies.

We would like to state for the record that our position is not solely based on economics, but also a genuine concern for our community. We are in unprecedented territory in our history and recognize that tourism may be the only major provider for our islands in the near future. As industry leaders, we feel a great sense of responsibility to provide for our people. At the same time, continued investments in our businesses can only be made within a stable and supportive business climate.

If the federal government would like to help us transition to an economy patterned after the U.S. mainland, we would welcome help. But we must humbly ask that U.S. Congress and federal agencies first work in partnership with our community and local government to create a realistic WORKING PLAN for business incentives, mitigation and economic recovery.

In other words, if the U.S. would like the CNMI to be like Guam or Hawaii, help us to become like these more advanced economies. Invest with us in our infrastructure and help the local government to reduce the high costs of doing business. Help us to stabilize and provide essential air service. Help us to reduce our rising costs of shipping resulting from higher fuel costs, our isolated location, and the rapid loss of our garment industry.

Finally, please help us to develop a tourism education program so we can prepare more local people for jobs, while allowing us to retain the level of foreign workforce we need to serve our customers and compete against other tourism destinations.

The members of the Hotel Association thank you for your kind consideration of our views.

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APPENDIX

I. Hotel room Occupancy and Rate Statistics, as prepared by the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands for Saipan's hotels, 1992 to 2007.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

"Strategic Initiatives for 2006-2010," a strategic plan for tourism, prepared for the Office of CNMI Governor by the Ad Hoc Tourism committee, Strategic Economic Development Council, May 2006.

HANMI AVERAGE MONTHLY ROOM OCCUPANCY RATE

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2
Jan.	82.30%	83.40%	76.85%	74.64%	86.92%	91.96%	69.85%	60.54%	61.15%	64.23%	72.47%	82.63%	76.61%	74
Feb.	87.90%	85.00%	85.28%	87.77%	92.03%	95.92%	71.90%	69.48%	69.32%	71.63%	66.79%	79.28%	82.03%	76
Mar.	80.10%	74.90%	78.98%	82.20%	88.22%	81.80%	58.86%	58.37%	58.87%	60.65%	57.25%	63.69%	69.96%	70
Apr.	70.30%	62.00%	66.85%	71.42%	80.76%	83.67%	56.70%	55.89%	55.37%	56.05%	52.00%	51.84%	64.81%	69
May	75.00%	67.22%	73.38%	83.30%	85.79%	83.49%	58.97%	56.62%	58.22%	57.66%	53.26%	50.40%	63.75%	66
Jun	77.30%	64.50%	68.66%	79.06%	84.59%	82.71%	57.82%	56.38%	63.09%	55.30%	60.93%	49.89%	76.93%	74
July	76.20%	69.28%	77.07%	83.46%	81.94%	74.24%	51.89%	59.65%	62.08%	57.40%	67.87%	59.53%	70.87%	73
Aug.	77.70%	87.24%	87.35%	91.87%	90.22%	75.08%	55.83%	60.62%	63.83%	61.63%	71.61%	63.39%	74.66%	71
Sep.	85.90%	75.87%	83.77%	89.09%	87.29%	77.92%	52.78%	60.89%	62.79%	47.88%	64.06%	71.64%	79.33%	79
Oct.	73.80%	67.56%	69.29%	77.90%	83.26%	73.67%	47.05%	60.46%	59.82%	32.98%	54.68%	63.67%	63.26%	60
Nov.	78.40%	73.56%	82.32%	87.29%	90.14%	81.53%	57.62%	65.27%	62.84%	39.33%	63.84%	71.37%	67.23%	60
Dec.	75.10%	71.39%	74.58%	83.51%	75.70%	74.26%	57.32%	61.16%	57.37%	48.41%	75.57%	71.22%	71.59%	63
	78.10%	**73.49%**	**77.03%**	**82.62%**	**85.57%**	**81.35%**	**58.05%**	**60.44%**	**61.23%**	**54.43%**	**63.36%**	**64.88%**	**71.75%**	**70**

AVERAGE MONTHLY ROOM RATE

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2
Jan.	$117.98	$126.96	$120.66	$128.14	$137.01	$153.97	$152.90	$113.47	$101.10	$102.27	$95.48	$97.81	$87.50	$8
Feb.	$121.84	$123.63	$116.50	$119.29	$137.56	$145.88	$137.17	$92.17	$88.38	$86.45	$71.83	$87.76	$80.67	$8
Mar.	$121.43	$124.38	$114.60	$116.34	$117.08	$143.26	$137.65	$104.65	$83.91	$89.28	$82.01	$82.43	$79.33	$8
Apr.	$102.05	$108.99	$106.09	$105.93	$117.52	$125.96	$117.26	$96.04	$85.24	$87.49	$78.26	$73.64	$79.24	$8
May	$103.63	$109.37	$102.19	$107.44	$115.96	$123.44	$113.64	$96.02	$88.42	$88.90	$81.75	$72.74	$79.32	$8
June	$107.71	$110.17	$101.54	$110.23	$120.40	$128.68	$107.87	$89.09	$76.90	$80.54	$72.02	$70.61	$72.99	$7
July	$123.04	$116.64	$113.05	$125.32	$135.40	$145.17	$120.93	$107.64	$90.56	$92.24	$80.85	$79.25	$79.86	$8
Aug.	$141.95	$134.05	$130.17	$146.21	$162.96	$172.53	$140.73	$138.73	$113.55	$122.65	$107.46	$109.37	$91.95	$9
Sep.	$114.59	$111.28	$113.35	$119.74	$125.11	$130.45	$95.15	$88.17	$80.33	$80.41	$74.68	$75.00	$78.05	$8
Oct.	$95.32	$97.22	$95.30	$101.79	$108.96	$113.53	$83.84	$83.15	$73.49	$77.13	$72.05	$75.51	$73.62	$7
Nov.	$93.49	$103.64	$92.26	$103.18	$111.29	$115.32	$81.47	$81.42	$80.30	$73.91	$74.30	$70.31	$75.31	$7
Dec.	$109.69	$111.79	$108.05	$117.63	$143.52	$134.60	$118.12	$97.22	$94.61	$89.93	$86.79	$90.97	$87.21	$9
	$112.82	**$114.84**	**$109.48**	**$116.77**	**$127.73**	**$136.06**	**$117.23**	**$98.98**	**$88.06**	**$89.27**	**$81.46**	**$82.11**	**$80.42**	**$8**

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

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Jan	1,951
Feb	2,018
Mar	2,003
Apr	1,981
May	1,964
June	1,959