WASHINGTON, DC– Congressman Joe Courtney today released the following statement after the Department of Labor announced that 200,000 new jobs were added in December. The sixth-consecutive month of 100,000-plus job growth reduced the country's unemployment rate to 8.5 percent – the lowest it has been in three years.

"Today's report is encouraging, and comes on the heels of other good economic news. Consumer confidence is on the rise, U.S. manufacturers added jobs in two consecutive years, and small businesses again are adding workers. The road ahead is not easy. We still have a lot of work to do and we face many challenges, including extending the payroll tax cut for the remainder of the year. This tax cut is already giving working families a lift, boosting their spending and our economy, and extending this targeted tax relief for middle class families is critical to keeping us moving in the right direction."

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