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New York, February 3 (RHC)-- Millions of frustrated Americans have been living in dire conditions as some U.S. states are too overwhelmed to tackle their immense backlogs of unemployment application. An NBC report on Tuesday revealed that since the COVID pandemic broke out ruining the U.S. economy, millions of jobless Americans still haven't received unemployment benefits, while others endured long delays.

"It makes you just feel worthless, like you're begging someone to give you something that was entitled to be given," one woman was quoted as saying in the report entitled 'A big issue': Unemployment aid backlog is dire for millions of Americans. "That's been very difficult, very frustrating for people that have, some of them, waited many, many weeks or even months for their benefits," said Andrew Stettner, a senior fellow at the Century Foundation think tank. "It's a big issue."

According to the article, unemployment claims in the US were currently way above the pre-pandemic rates, when weekly applications typically numbered around 225,000. Claims reached a high of 7 million in March, according to the Labor Department.

The number of people applying for first-time unemployment claims has hovered around 1 million in recent months; 847,000 claims were filed in the week that ended January 23rd, the department reported, and, in total, nearly 16 million people now get some type of unemployment aid, it reported.

To manage the increase in claims, state agencies hired new employees, brought back retired ones and worked seven days a week to try to keep up with the staggering numbers, it said. The report noted that the state agencies were also trying to combat fraud.

According to the report, the nonpartisan Century Foundation found that the aid program should have been paying out \$11.5 billion per week in January. Instead, it said, actual payouts reported by the Treasury Department for all unemployment benefits totaled \$28.7 billion as of late January, about \$17.3 billion less than the \$46.1 billion in benefits "that would have gone out if everyone would have received the promised aid on time."

Meanwhile, according to a projection by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), it will take the US economy until 2030 to restore its jobs lost to the pandemic, and return the unemployment rate to pre-COVID levels.

CBO released its projection on Monday amid a widening debate about the federal government's economic stimulus, as Senate Republicans argue that U.S. President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion proposal would spend too much taxpayer money without justification.

Biden's so-called American Rescue Plan, which was unveiled last month, includes a host of measures aimed at revitalizing the America's diminishing economy. Biden aims to aid the struggling US states' governments, raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, safely reopen schools, roll out a massive COVID vaccination campaign and raise the size of stimulus checks Congress approved last month.

"We'll use taxpayers' dollars to rebuild America. We'll buy American products, supporting millions of American manufacturing jobs, enhancing our competitive strength in an increasingly competitive world," Biden claimed.

However, experts predict the U.S. economy to continue to decline, and China, the world's second-largest economy, to overtake the United States as the world's largest economy.

China's economy has been projected to pass the U.S. economy in 2030, as its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) forecast shows more than eight percent growth this year alone. Moreover, China has been the only major economy to have dodged contraction in 2020.



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