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**ABC Report Highlights Growth but Foreshadows Downturn in Construction Sector Hiring**

In a recent [publication](#), pulled from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) reported adding over 42,000 new net jobs in the construction sector in February alone. The update highlights a continued trend in the sector that has expanded employment by 223,000 jobs, an increase of 3.0%, over the past 12 months.

Although the report highlights record lows in unemployment across all segments of the construction sector, experts quickly highlighted the adverse impact that Covid-19 will likely have on the construction industry and the economy as a whole. ABC’s Chief Economist, Anirban Basu, stated, “seldom is there a jobs report that tells us less about the direction of the U.S. economy than this one…. While the level of construction activity is unlikely to be fundamentally altered in the near-term—except for when sick workers are asked to stay home — these impacts will eventually catch up to the nation’s construction sector.”
Congress and the White House Advance Measures for Covid-19 Relief

Late last week, both the Trump Administration and the House of Representatives took swift action to advance relief measures to blunt the spread and impact of the Covid-19 virus. During a late afternoon press conference on Friday, March 13, the Trump Administration announced an emergency declaration to unlock approximately $50B in additional funding and waive several regulations for health care providers to assist state and local officials in the dissemination of health and safety information, as well as the distribution of medicines, tests, food, and supplies.

Later in the evening, the House approved the “Families First Coronavirus Response Act” (H.R. 6201), which provides additional appropriations for employers to provide emergency sick and paid family and medical leave, enhanced funding for states to provide unemployment insurance, and additional funding for SNAP and other student and senior meal programs among other provisions. President Trump has expressed public support for the House bill; however, some members of Congress have expressed concerns that the bill does not do enough to protect workers in all sectors of the economy, particularly those working for larger corporations. The House and the Senate are expected to continue work on relief legislation this week. During a press conference last week, Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX), who serves on the Senate Finance Committee, stated the chamber will focus on advancing relief for Covid-19 and that, “bigger issues to boost economy, like more infrastructure spending or a possible payroll tax, would have to come later after additional discussions about best approaches.”

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