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Statement of U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis on success of summer jobs program for nation's youth

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis today issued the following statement regarding the success of the Summer Youth Employment Program for the nation's youth:

"We are proud that through the Recovery Act, more than 226,000 of our nation's young people had the opportunity to participate in summer employment as of July 31. The Summer Youth Employment Program surpassed our expectations and enriched the lives of thousands of our nation's youth by creating real work opportunities. At the same time, tens of thousands of young people also participated in Recovery Act funded career readiness programs such as skills training and mentoring activities that will continue year-round.

"The 2009 Summer Youth Employment Program came at a time when young people were facing a difficult job market. After a decade without a dedicated federal summer jobs program, the effort created opportunities for young people that would have not existed otherwise.

"It is important to note that at no time did summer youth participants compete with adults seeking permanent employment. In fact, public and private employers worked with states and local areas to create summer youth employment experiences specifically for young people. And, for the most part, wages and stipends paid to young people through this program were federally funded.

Simply put, we have succeeded in our efforts to increase job skills and career readiness for our nation's youth through this targeted program. That being noted, overall youth unemployment is still unacceptably high and the need remains to build on the clear successes of this year's Summer Youth Employment Program."