

Hassett says unemployment rate could be 'north of 20%' in May with possible double-digits in November

By [Devan Cole](#), CNN

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Washington (CNN) — [A senior White House economic adviser](#) on Sunday again forecasted the US could see steep unemployment rates in May and June amid the coronavirus crisis, with the possibility of double-digit jobless numbers in November.

[Kevin Hassett](#), a senior economic adviser to [President Donald Trump](#), said in an interview with CNN's Dana Bash on "State of the Union" that the unemployment rate -- which has already reached [Great Depression-level](#) figures -- for May could be "north of 20%" if "some technical things that kind of messed up" with the claims reporting are fixed.

"My expectation is that since there's still initial claims for unemployment insurance in May, that the unemployment rate will be higher in June than in May, but then after that it should start to trend down," Hassett said.

Asked by Bash if "it's possible that unemployment will be in double digits in November," Hassett replied: "Yes, I do. But I think that all the signs of economic recovery are going to be raging everywhere."

"Of course you could still not be back to full employment by September or October," he added. "If there were a vaccine in July, then I'd be way more optimistic about it."

A dismal unemployment rate could negatively impact Trump's reelection prospects, as he's made the strong employment numbers that have existed for most of his presidency a key talking point during rallies and interviews.

[The comments from Hassett come two days after he told CNN](#) that he thinks the unemployment rate, which hit 14.7% in April, may rise to 22% to 23% by May and edge up a bit in June before heading lower.

"June will be higher," he said on Friday. "That will be the turning point."

Hassett's predictions also come as [states begin to reopen](#), paving the way for some of the economic strain brought about by the pandemic to potentially start to decrease. But the adviser noted on Sunday that unemployment figures, which have already hit historic levels, "will be something that moves back slower."

Hassett said last week he believes many unemployed and furloughed workers might return to the labor force more quickly than he previously expected. He credited the quick response from politicians and the Fed.

"This was the biggest negative shock ever, but we also had the biggest policy response ever," Hassett said.

CNN's Paul R. La Monica contributed to this report.



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