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How Does Employment Growth in Wisconsin Compare to Other States Over the Past Decade?

by:

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As we head into the 2014 election season, few issues of economic analysis are more closely watched and contentious in Wisconsin than the rate of employment growth in the state. Yet, for all the politicized spinning of official employment statistics in recent years, there has been little systematic and comparative data presented to gauge Wisconsin's job creation performance over time. Where does Wisconsin rank today among the 50 states in employment growth? How does the state's employment performance over the past three years compare to trends over the preceding decade?

The charts below present data from what is widely acknowledged as the most comprehensive and reliable source of state-level employment data: the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).¹ The most recent QCEW employment data is for June 2013. Thus, to compare Wisconsin's job growth performance to other states over the past decade, we have calculated, for every state in the country, the rate of year-over-year employment change in June of each year between 2001-02 and 2012-13. Several findings emerge from the data:

- Wisconsin ranked 41st among the nation's states in the rate of employment growth between June 2012 and June 2013 (Figure 12). This was the lowest rank for Wisconsin over the past decade, and a precipitous decline in rank from as recently as 2011, when Wisconsin ranked 21st (Figure 15). Between 2002-2011, Wisconsin's average rank was 27th.
- Wisconsin's rate of employment growth has underperformed the national rate in 9 of the last 12 years (Figure 13 and Table 1). However, Wisconsin's performance has deteriorated in recent years. In 2010-2011, Wisconsin's rate of year-over-year employment growth in June was slightly above the national rate. In 2011-2012, employment grew in Wisconsin at 78 percent of the national rate. In 2012-13, employment grew in Wisconsin at just 36 percent of the national rate.
- Wisconsin's rate of employment growth has trailed Minnesota's in 9 of the last 12 years (Figure 14 and Table 2). Since 2010, the gap between the states in job creation has widened: between June 2010-11, Wisconsin's rate of job growth was 55 percent of Minnesota's rate; between 2011-12, the rate of job growth in Wisconsin was 97 percent of Minnesota's; and between 2012-13, Wisconsin's rate of job growth fell to only 30 percent of Minnesota's.

¹ For a description of the QCEW methodology, see: <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewover.htm>

Figure 1:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2001-2002

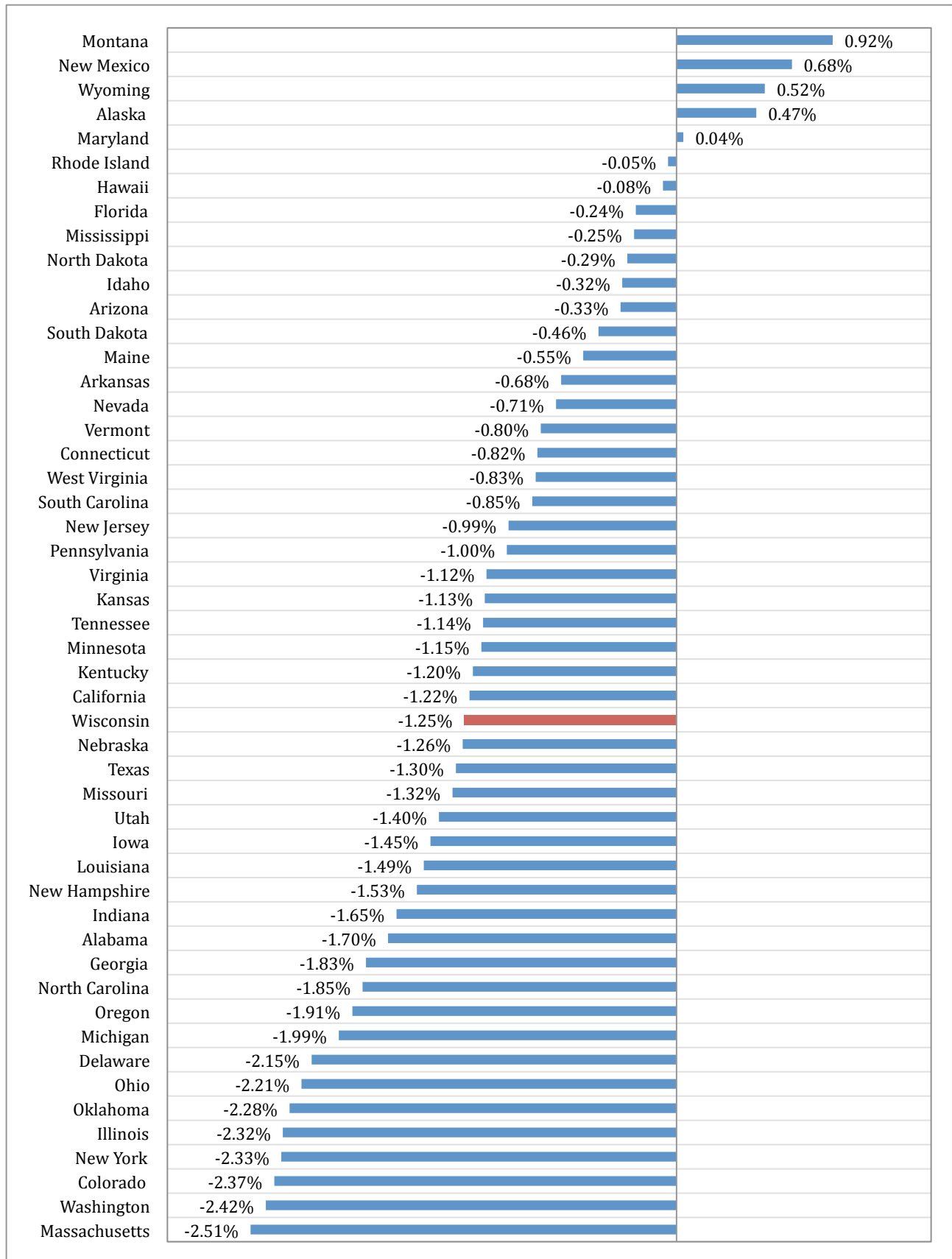


Figure 2:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2002-2003

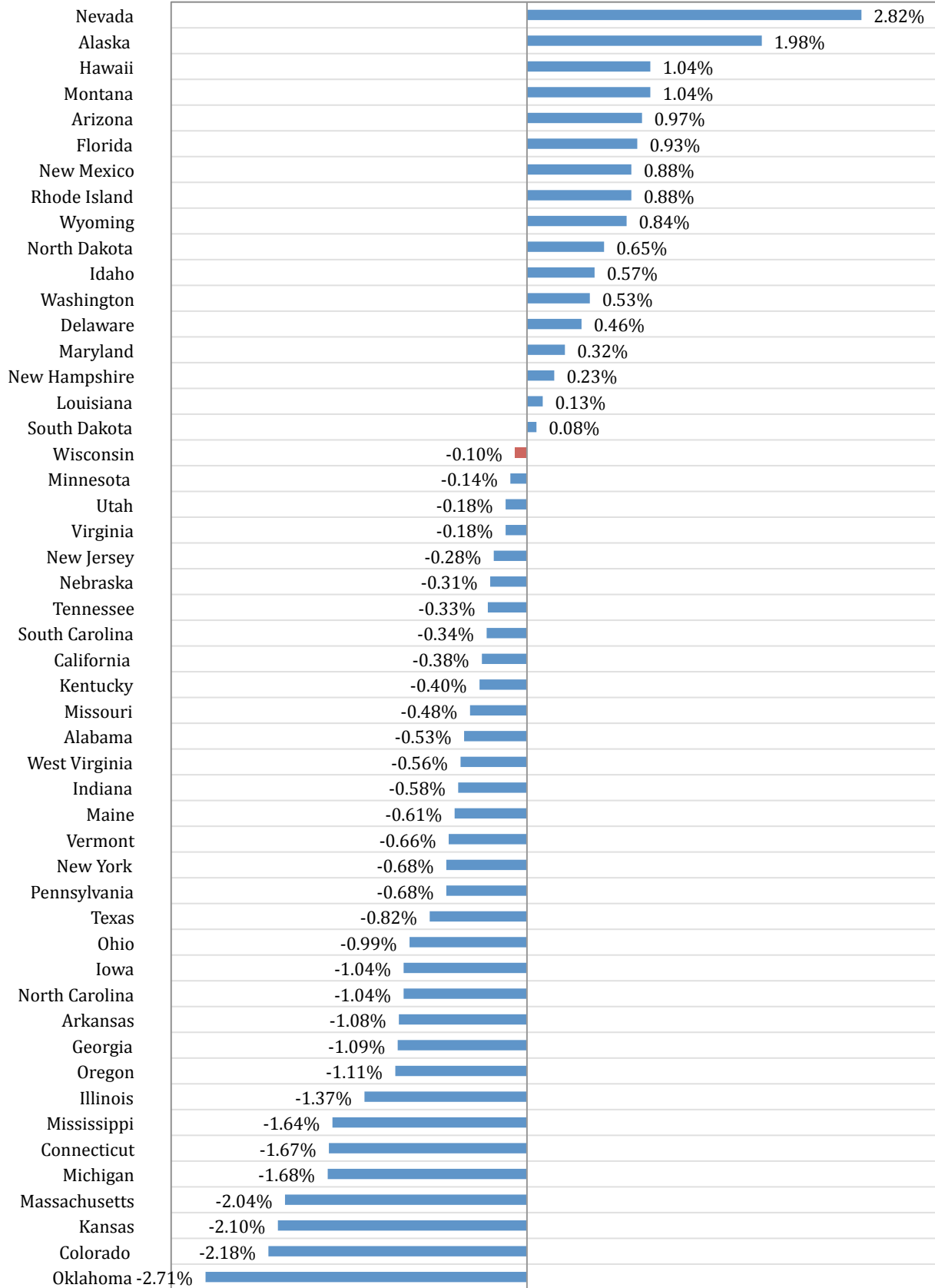


Figure 3:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2003-2004

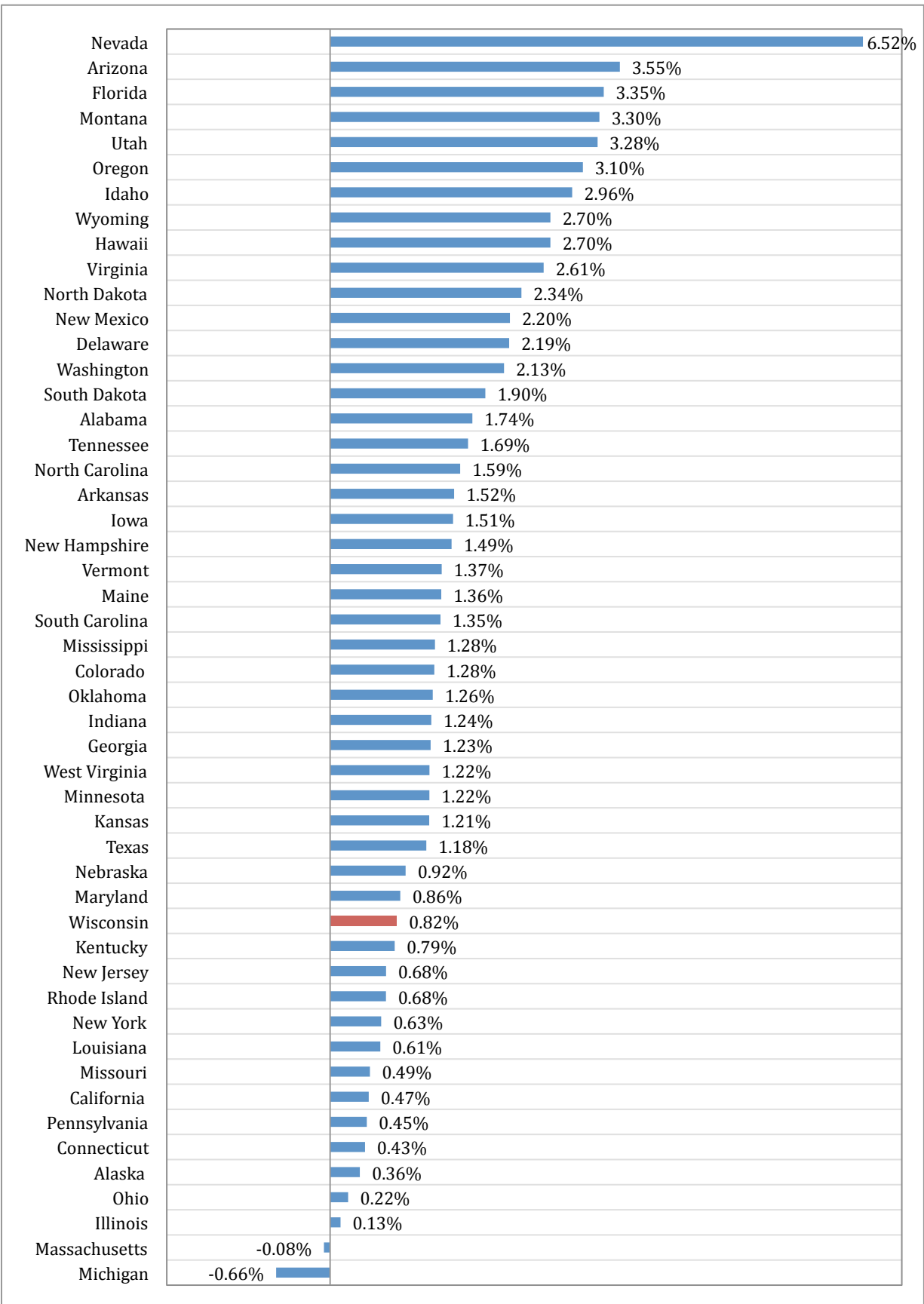


Figure 4:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2004-2005

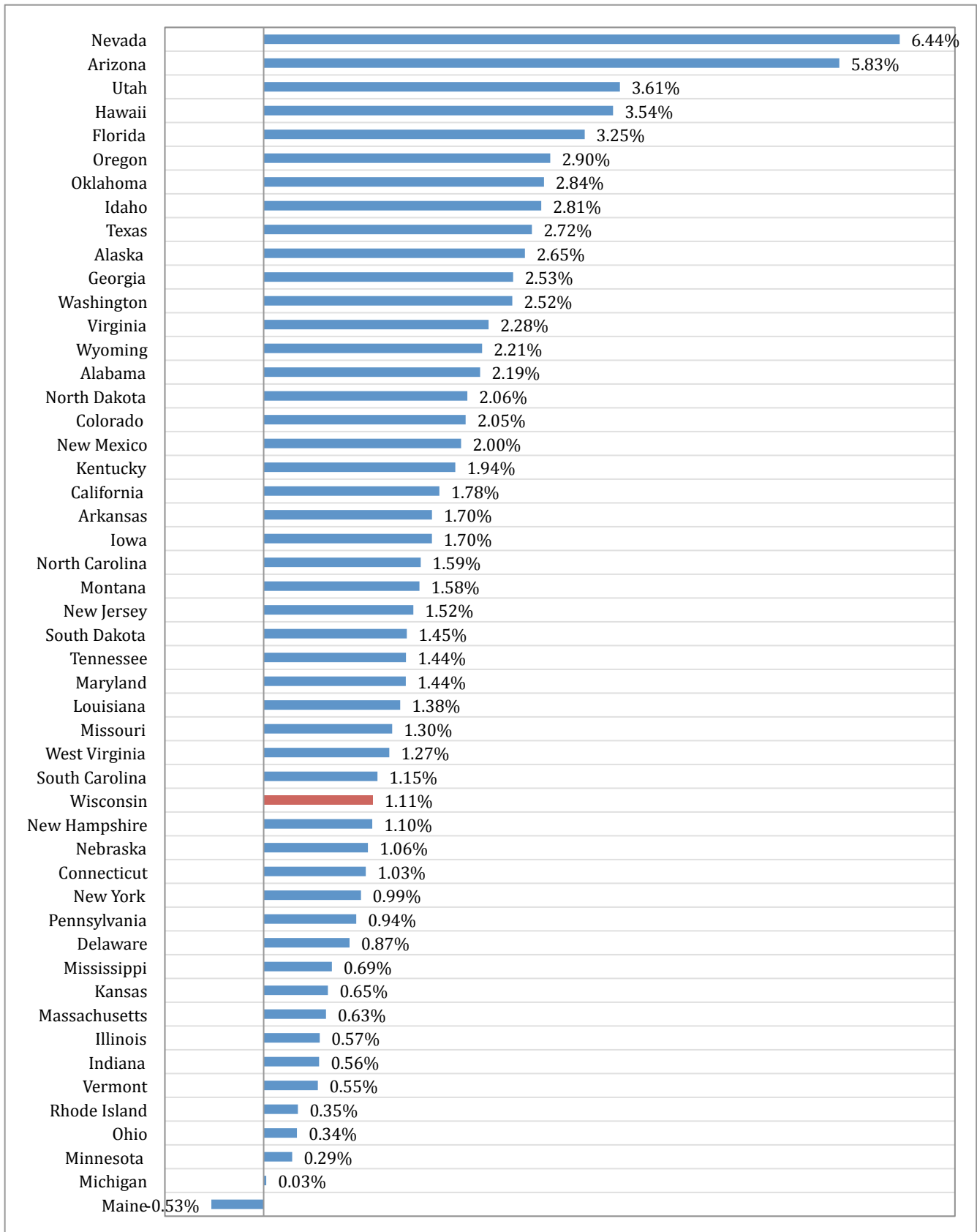


Figure 5:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2005-2006

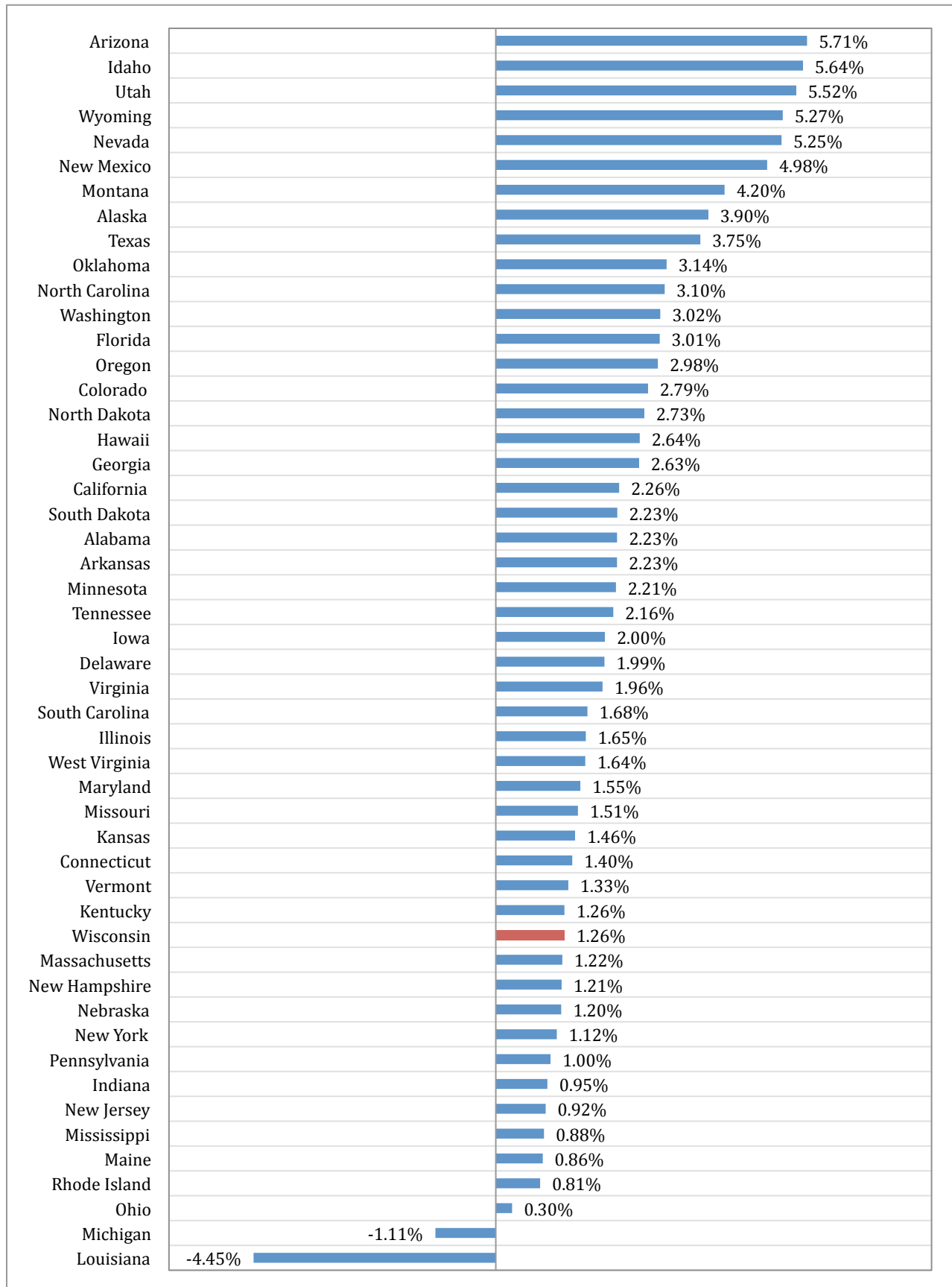


Figure 6:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2006-2007

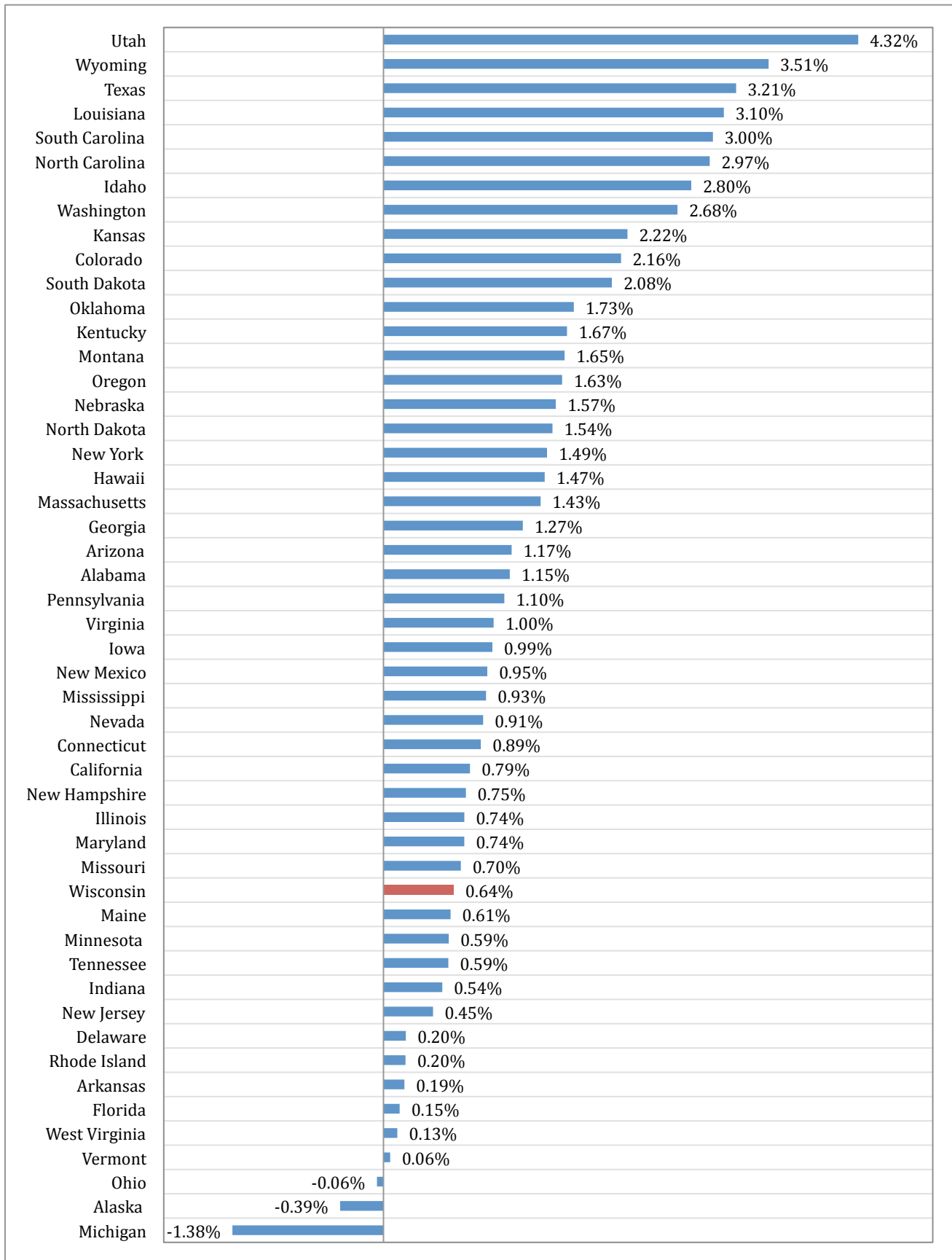


Figure 7:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2007-2008

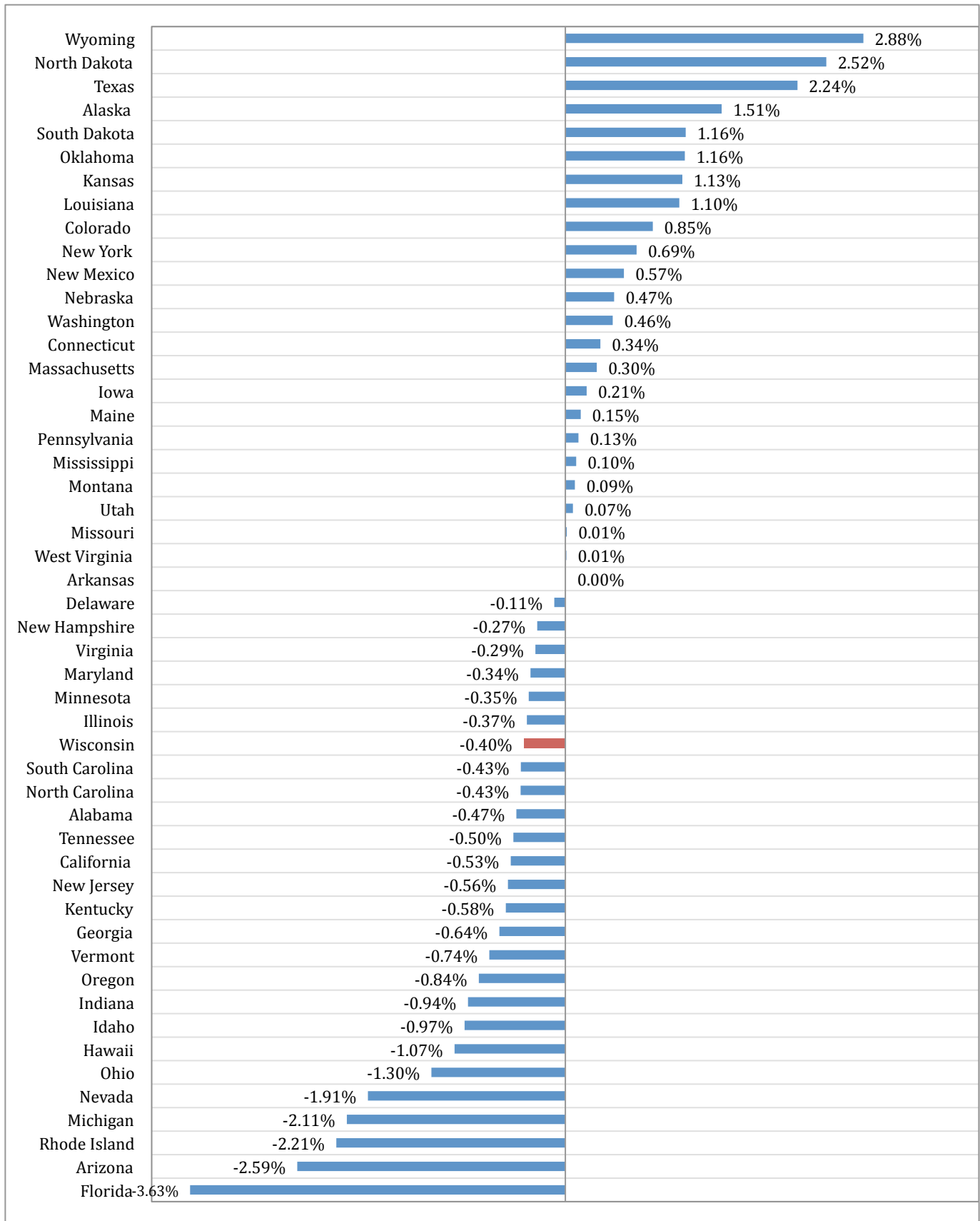


Figure 8:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2008-2009

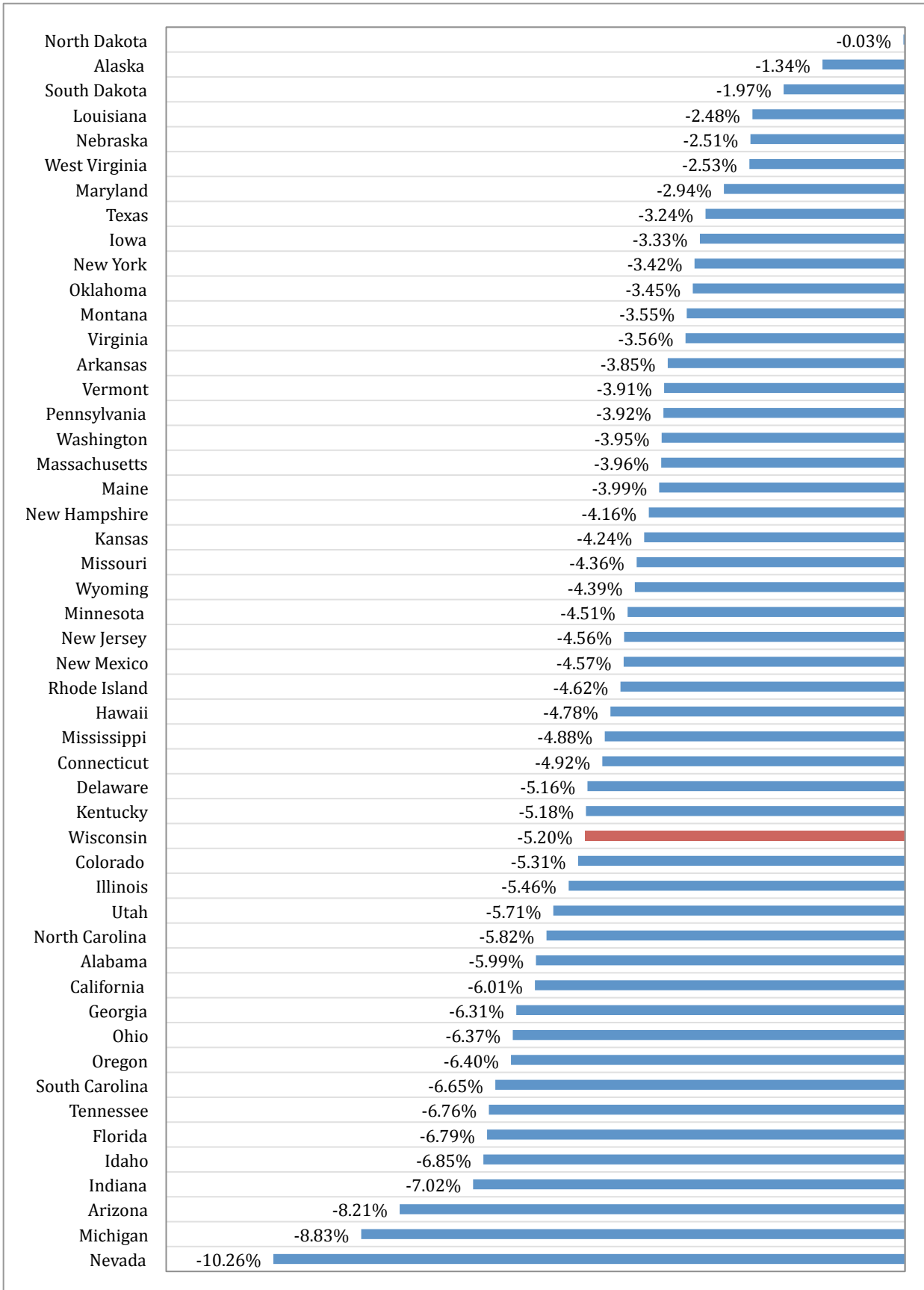


Figure 9:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2009-2010

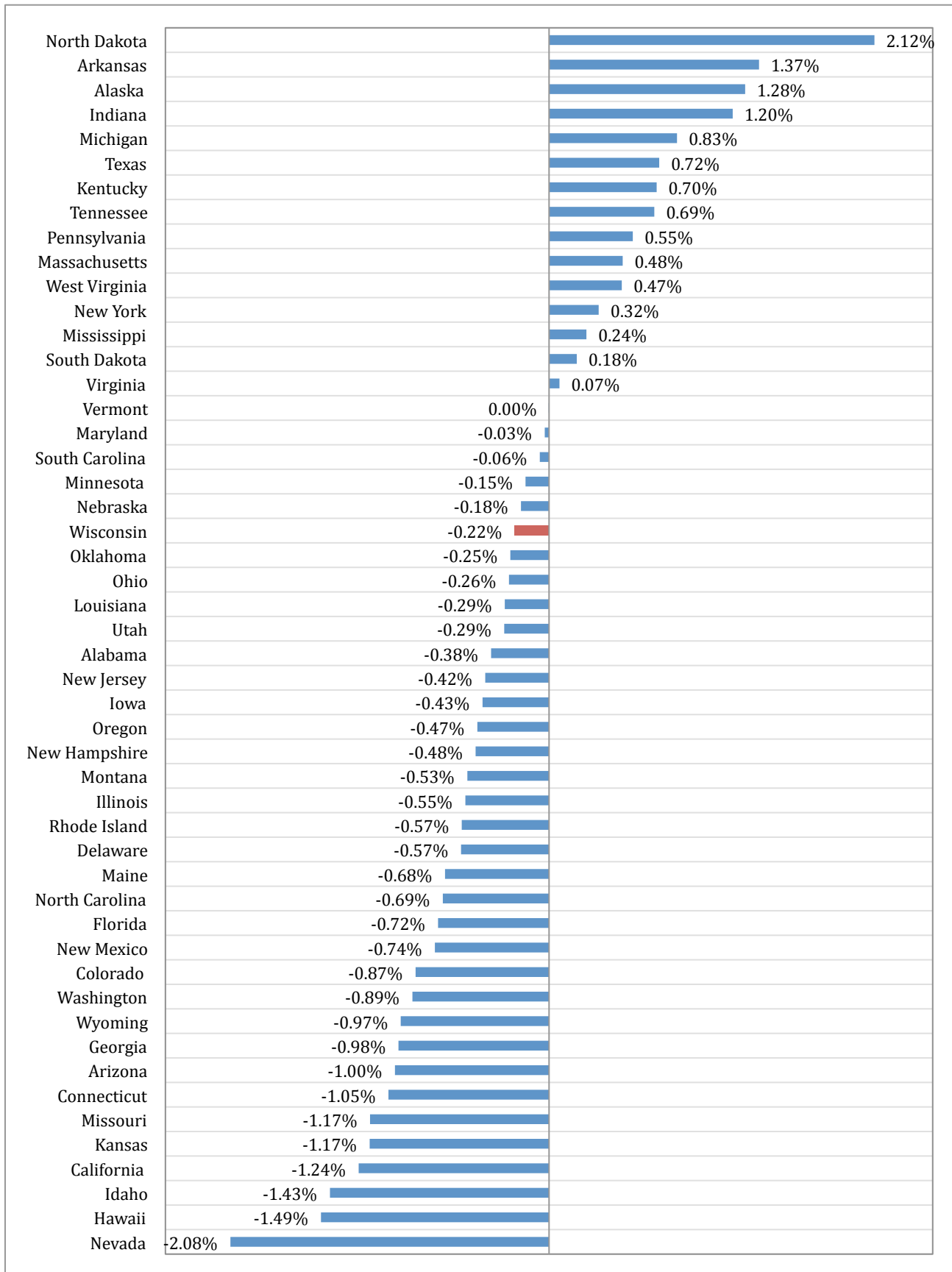


Figure 10:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2010-2011

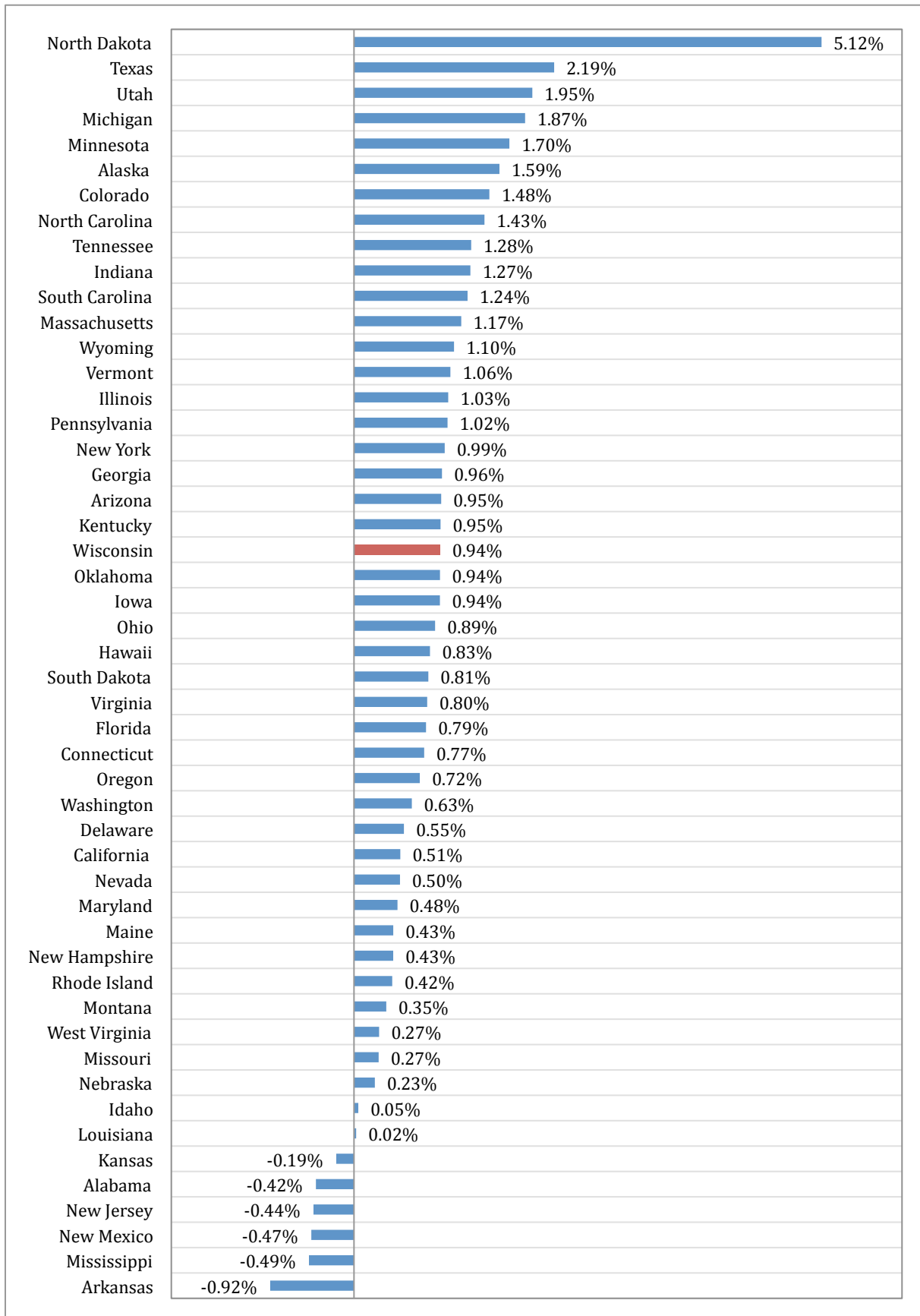


Figure 11:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2011-2012

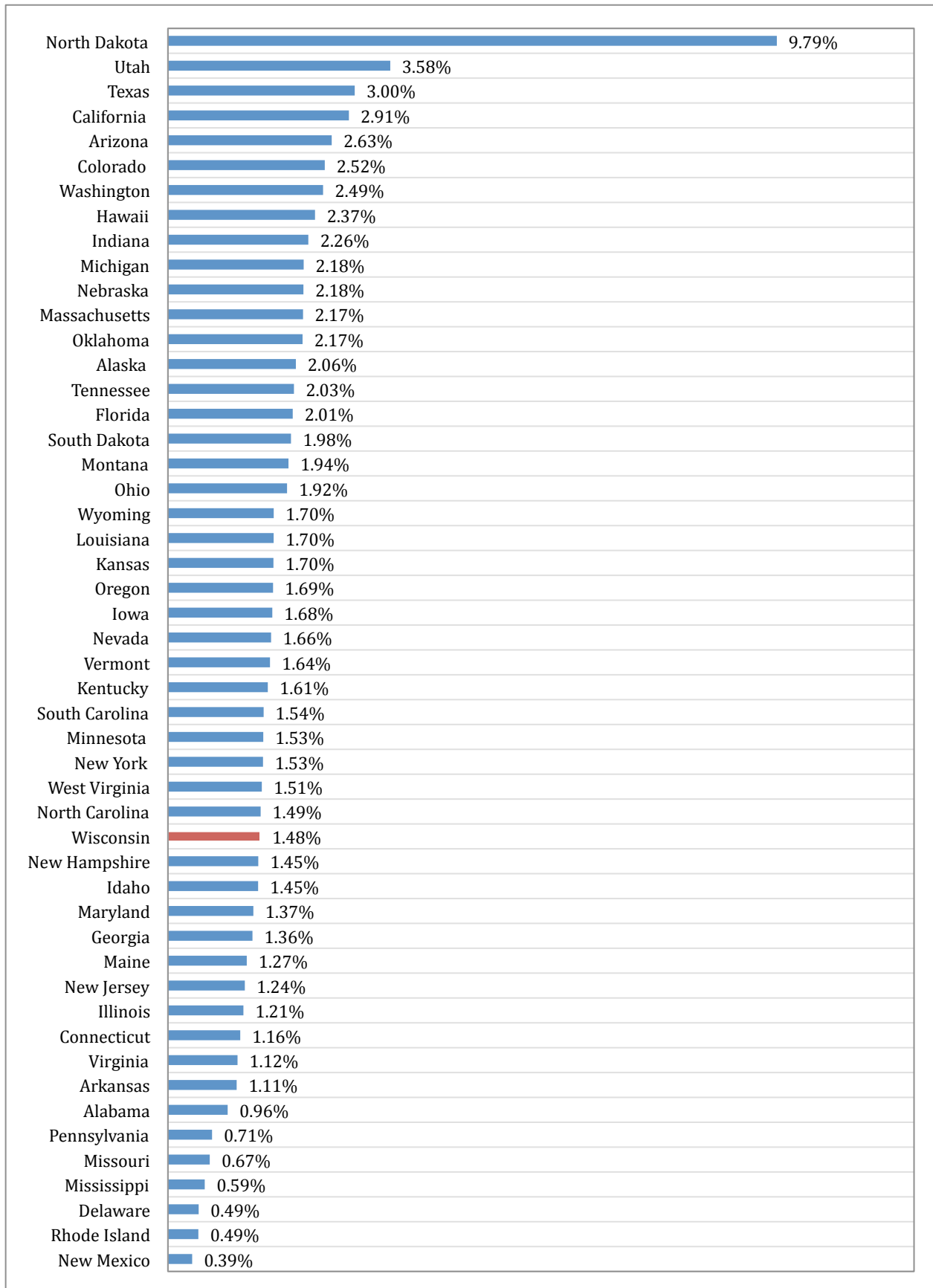


Figure 12:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change, By State: June 2012-2013

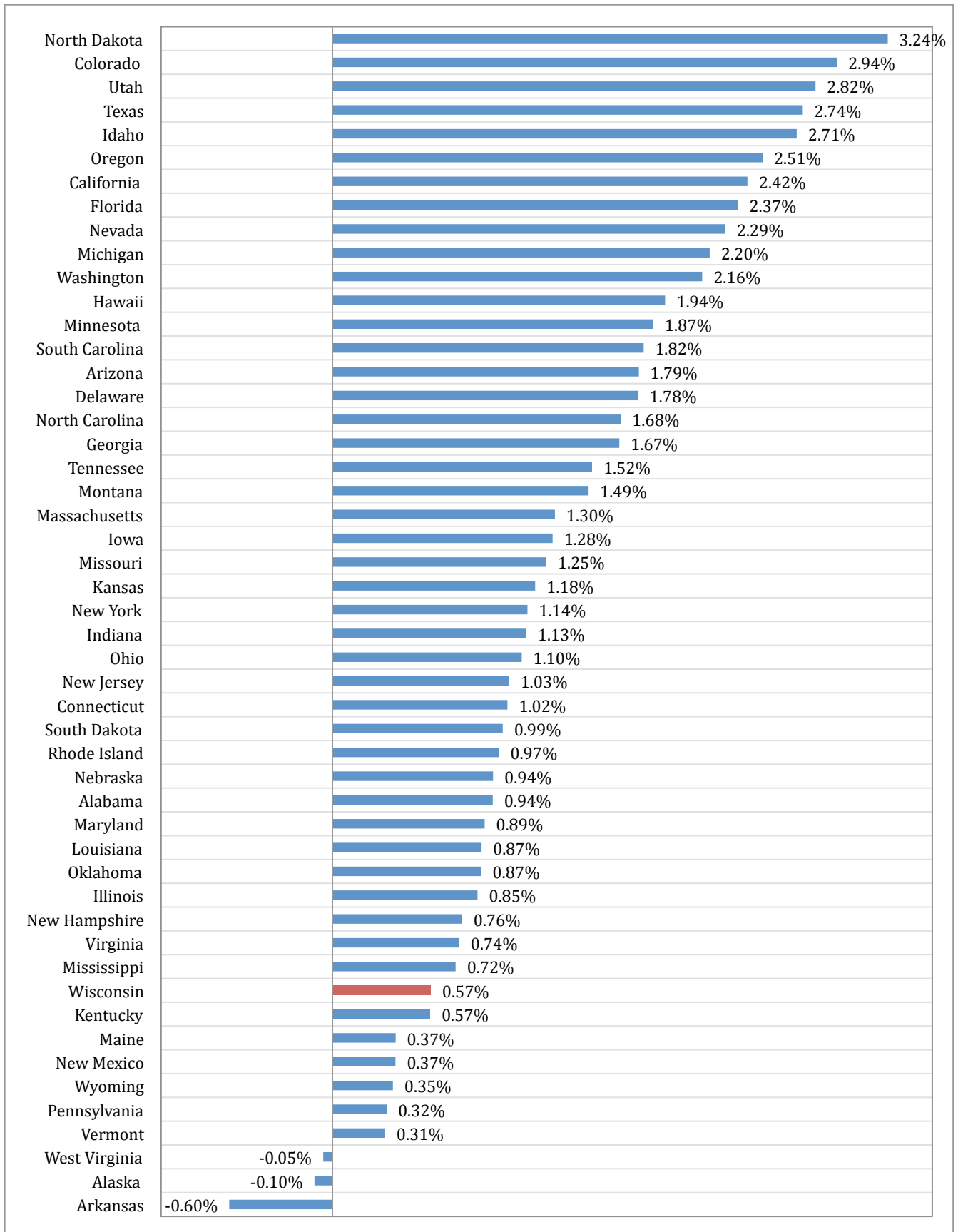


Figure 13:
Year-Over Year Employment Change: Wisconsin v. the U.S. – (June) 2002-2013

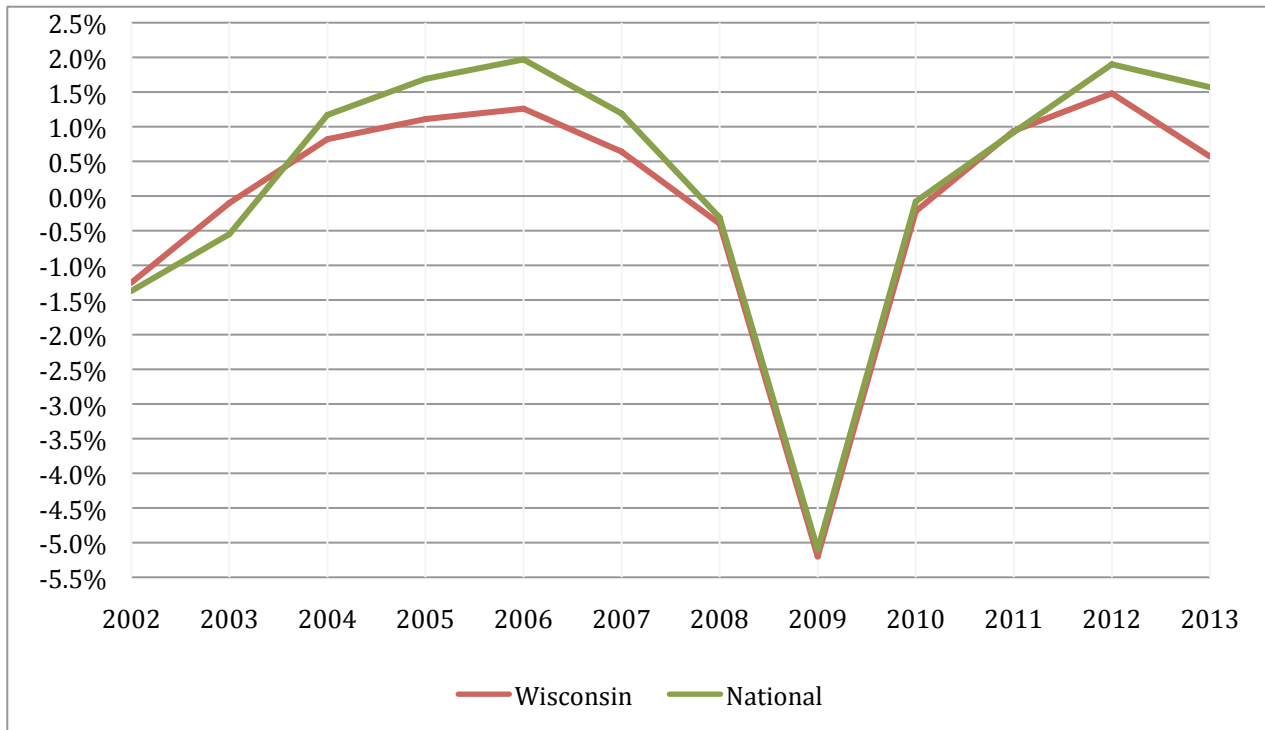


Table 1:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change:
Wisconsin v. the United States: (June) 2002-2013

Year	Wisconsin	United States
2002	-1.25%	-1.37%
2003	-0.10%	-0.55%
2004	0.82%	1.17%
2005	1.11%	1.69%
2006	1.26%	1.97%
2007	0.64%	1.19%
2008	-0.40%	-0.31%
2009	-5.20%	-5.10%
2010	-0.22%	-0.08%
2011	0.94%	0.92%
2012	1.48%	1.90%
2013	0.57%	1.57%

Figure 14:
Year-Over Year Employment Change: Wisconsin v. Minnesota – (June) 2002-2013

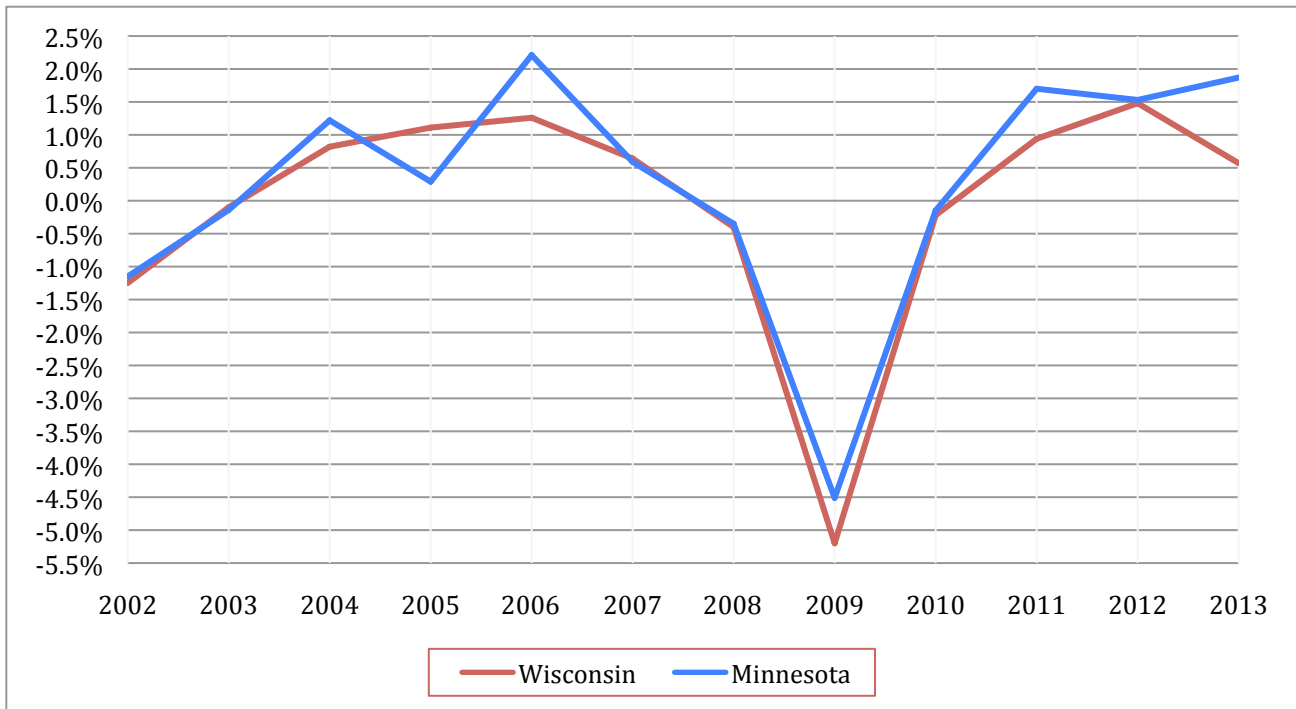


Table 2:
Year-Over-Year Employment Change:
Wisconsin v. Minnesota: (June) 2002-2013

Year	Wisconsin	Minnesota
2002	-1.25%	-1.15%
2003	-0.10%	-0.14%
2004	0.82%	1.22%
2005	1.11%	0.29%
2006	1.26%	2.21%
2007	0.64%	0.59%
2008	-0.40%	-0.35%
2009	-5.20%	-4.51%
2010	-0.22%	-0.15%
2011	0.94%	1.70%
2012	1.48%	1.53%
2013	0.57%	1.87%

Figure 15:
Wisconsin's Rank in Year-Over-Year Employment
Change Among All States: June 2002-2013

