

Project Fear takes another hit – employment and wages carry on rising

The latest employment figures are good. Unemployment has fallen to 4%, with strong jobs growth continuing. Vacancies are also at good levels, implying no immediate fall off in employment in prospect. Average earnings hit £27,500 a year as we go into 2019, with real wages now growing at around a 1% annual rate.

This means over the two and a half years since we voted to leave, the economy has continued to generate a lot of extra jobs, bringing unemployment down. Most of these jobs are full time, and many are well paid, boosting average earnings. That is the opposite of the recession allied to big job losses we were told by the Treasury and Remain experts to expect after the referendum decision.

Many in Parliament wish to increase the uncertainties and carry on portraying a gloomy outlook from their own pessimistic imaginations. Many of them now are desperately searching for a delay to Brexit so they can prolong the uncertainty and spend many more months rowing over what kind of Brexit they want or will allow, regardless of the views of the voters and regardless of what the EU might agree to. It is particularly cheering that employment has grown so well recently, when the national conversation has been dominated by gloomy Remain MPs telling us the future is dreadful, and when the chances of us just leaving without signing the Withdrawal Agreement have risen thanks to the huge defeat of the Agreement in the Commons.

It also shows that the authorities attempts to slow and damage the economy with a series of tax attacks on homes and cars, and with the slowing of credit, have not been sufficient to stop overall jobs and wage growth, though they have of course done damage to the targeted sectors.