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Priorities for the Next Four Years: Jobs versus Environmental Issues

Obama once again has become our president for the next four years; it wasn’t an easy win against Romney, but now he has a bigger battle to win, reestablishing our economy. Over the next four years Obama needs to address many issues that have been affecting the economy and the people as well. Although I agree to a point that environmentalists are right in that the president should focus on climate change, I still insist that his focus should be on jobs. Robert Reich believes that creating new jobs for the millions of Americans that have become unemployed during the economic crisis would finically stabilize many families and benefit the economy. Although one of the main concerns of the president is to reduce the deficit that the country has, he cannot solve this issue if millions of people are without jobs. “If the economy grows faster than its current 2 percent annualized rate, the deficit shrinks in proportion. Tax receipts grow, and the deficit becomes more manageable.” (Reich, 2012, November 8) Although many people feel the environmental challenges are far more important than jobs the president could create jobs that focus on targeting the environmental issues and therefore he could address both issues at the same time.

There are concerns that if government spending is reduced and tax rates on the middle class are increased, then economic growth will slow and we might be forced into another period of recession. If this happens it would only make the economic issue worse than it is now. Therefore the president should focus on keeping taxes low for the middle class and “continue the president’s payroll tax cut and extend the Bush tax cuts for income under 250,000 and continue government spending.” (Reich, 2012, November 8) The president also present the issue of inequality the is existing between the wealthy and the middle class and Reich stresses that it’s important for the president to focus on the middle class because if we focus on the rich then the economy won’t be able to grow and create more jobs. The answer to fixing the economy and creating new jobs exist with helping the middle class only then can we move forward.

Despite the fact that there are many issues that the president has to address, Elaine Chao believes that if he focuses on job creation this could solve America’s unemployment problem. Many small businesses fear for the increase of “higher taxes, overzealous regulators, and expensive government mandates” because this could hurt them in the future. Also because many small businesses favored Romney’s proposal, Obama’s reelection is rumored to have caused the “Dow to down 350 at one point” however this is only a suggestion made by many. (Chao, 2012, November 8) The level of confidence is low for those that would like to start a small business or expand in their business because these rumors of tax rates increasing still remains in the air. However if the administration acts promptly and is able to convince people who want to expand or start small businesses that regulatory burdens will be lessen then the confidence level will rise and small businesses will create more jobs for those seeking employment. We can also considered that small businesses can “increase with regulatory and strategic reforms, like reducing marginal rates, repealing the alternative minimum tax and making the U.S. the most welcoming for employers to relocate and create jobs.” (Chao, 2012, November 8) This is good for the economy because not only will it fix the unemployment issue in the country, but it will also reduce the U.S. deficit because more money is being made. Also “new foreign markets for American enterprises will boost job creation” creating more relationships with other nations to benefit our country. (Chao, 2012, November 8) This is good too because not only are we securing our economic status, but by opening new foreign markets we are creating trade to produce more money and attracting foreign countries as well.

Environmental issues such as climate change also pose great concerns for the president and many believe like Carol Browner that this should be his main priority for the next four years. However we have seen how important it is for the president to focus on jobs first and then worry about other issues. The president however can make some sort of comprise and create jobs that focus on the fixing the problems that climate change has created. Many environmentalist like Carol Browner believe that climate change has produce a lot of disaster over the past year that only has impacted our country physically but economically as well. Browner stresses the importance of climate change because if the president encourages and spreads awareness about going green, then a lot of money can be saved if climate change is somehow controlled. Although it’s not for certain that we can change nature course there is possible contributions that can be done to prevent from perhaps hurricanes reaching so far as the east coast and becoming stronger in other places like the Caribbean. Browner acknowledges how Obama’s energy bill created “more fuel efficient cars and the air we all breathe got a little cleaner”, but she hopes he continues with this so that the air can become more cleaner and more fuel efficient cars can be created. (Browner, 2012, November 8) Perhaps if Obama creates more jobs in the car industry then he will be able to target the issues affecting the environment as well as the unemployment rate.

Another issue that concern environmentalist is the matter that “right now states are responsible for overseeing fracking which has contributed to pollution across the country.” (Browner, 2012, November 7) Fracking post concerns for many environmentalist because it can cause dangerous consequences to the health of citizens and the environment as well. “The use of fracking - high-volume, hydraulic fracturing with horizontal drilling to access deep shale formations - requires millions of gallons of fresh water, acres of land per well pad, and the use of undisclosed chemicals.” (Ohio Environmental Council) These concerns post great concerns for the environment because fracking can cause contamination to the water that communities use and also more air emissions. Presenting these environmental issues in the president agenda can be quite overwhelming, but instead of addressing the issue headfast we can target it in ways where we are focusing on jobs and the environment at the same time.

Although I agree with Reich and Chao that jobs should be the main priority of the president for the next four years I also believe that environmental issues should be considered as well. A lot of people themselves are not concerned about the issues that affect the environmental, but if the president perhaps spread awareness of the issues of climate change then more people will become concerned. Also because a lot of people are physically affected by the unemployment crisis there is much demand that the president address the focus of jobs for the next four year. Browner though encourages that if Obama focuses on environmental issues then less money could be spend to on fixing the damages that natural disasters have created. Hurricane Sandy is one example on how climate change is not only posting an environmental issue but also an economic one. “Flooding forced the closure of all three of the major airports in the area, LaGuardia, John F. Kennedy and Newark Liberty. Water seeped into subway stations in Lower Manhattan and into the tunnel connecting Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, while high winds damaged a crane perched atop a Midtown skyscraper under construction, forcing authorities to evacuate the surrounding area.” (Matt Smith, 2012, October 30) These damages that hurricane Sandy has caused along the east coast has cost the U.S. millions of money on repairs for the states that were greatly affected by the storm. Perhaps the environmental issues that are posting great concerns to a lot of environmentalist will allow the president to create not only more jobs for the people that are unemployed but also decrease the amount of damages that natural disaster are the U.S to spend in fixing.

Over the next four years the president will have to address many issues that are being presented in his agenda and a lot of people hope that the president can create the change that he has so longed promised his people. Now that the president has been given a second opportunity to make a difference to his country a lot of weight will be on his shoulders until he makes some changes.