

## Job-Creation No Free Pass

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I'm so sick of the 'jobs argument'.

Sure, it's a huge development in a heavily forested area on the edge of a lake that is a water source, and, yes, up to 70% of this forest will be replaced with impervious roads and roofs. But we assure you that the polluted rain running off this development will be treated using the most advanced technology (omission: *'in studies supported, at least indirectly, by development interests'*). Besides, this development will create a couple thousand jobs (omission: *'based on our biased projections and mostly providing short-term employment to people who don't live here'*). And just think of the additional tax revenue...

Yes, this fertilizer plant (or bio-lab, off-shore oil site, fracking, etc.) may *potentially* be toxic (omission: *potentially = inevitably*), but we will take every security and environmental measure (omission: *'that we know of'*) to ensure there will never be a malfunction. Besides, think of the hundreds of jobs that will not be generated if this plant is not constructed.

Sure, the automotive industry has made a lot of bad decisions, not the least of which is ignoring market demand for increased gas mileage. But we can't let an American company that employs 200,000 people world-wide (omission: *'approximately 70 percent of which are hourly'*) go under! The unemployment rate will go through the roof!

On the other hand...

If we legalized crack and heroine, we could create tens of thousands of jobs overnight. Sure, these drugs are heavily addictive and can be toxic and deadly, but just imagine all the jobs (and tax revenue) that would be created if they were legalized. And we'd be getting jobs to the people who need them most – those with (or on the path to) criminal records. In addition to eliminating the immense cost of policing drug dealers, traffickers, consumers, etc., we'll go from spending over \$20,000 dollars/year imprisoning them to collecting taxes from their gainful employment. Lord knows how much tax revenue we could create by taxing the production, transportation and sale of these drugs.

Since when did job creation trump all other valid concerns?

We'd create a heck of a lot more jobs by turning our prison system into a valid citizen rehabilitation system, whereby at least nonviolent offenders receive education, practical work experience and counseling, so that they come out with legal survival tools and the means to become healthy and productive citizens. Rather than bare-bones probation, they should get out-patient counseling and ongoing assistance with finding places to eat, sleep

and work. Incidentally, making good on the SouthPoint-Auto-Park developer's original promise of a job-training center would be a good step in this direction.

We'd create a heck of a lot more jobs by limiting the work-week (to 40 or even 50 hours) for salaried employees, so that big, top-heavy companies were forced to hire the manpower that is actually required for their operations. Shoot, we could start even smaller, by offering appropriate maternity *and paternity* leave for all employees (hourly and salaried) and requiring companies to pay employees when they serve jury duty, so people might actually do their civic duty rather than do everything in their power to avoid it (this would benefit our most vulnerable citizens as well – those who are on trial).

In these cases, job-creation is a very beneficial side-effect, but the true impetus is salvaging the human soul.

Would this reduce upper and upper-middle-class salaries? Sure it would. But do people really need new wardrobes every season and new, expensive gadgets every Christmas, particularly when others can't even get food on the table?

'But the costs would be prohibitive' say the capitalist job creators, 'while our projects will generate jobs and tax revenue right now'. They seem to have a point. But when the deleterious side effects of the arguments above actually come to fruition (and history has proven that, more often than not, they eventually do – often with catastrophic consequences), it will cost taxpayers far more than the revenue generated by the job-creation arguments above.

When I hear a lot of ifs and buts, my red flag goes up. If someone is asking me to make a bunch of concessions, it's another red flag. And if the argument doesn't make sense when applied to other situations, then how can we not question the rationale?

"It's not that simple," I hear people saying. "Ethics are not black and white."

To that, I insist that our ethics would be a lot clearer if we stopped allowing financial interests to muddy the water.