

Job and Unemployment, What can be done?

Forget the government figures about the number of people out work – no job. The true figure is somewhere between 20 to 40 percent of persons unemployed. Some because of physical or mental problems are unable to work but they represent a small percent the unemployed. I think most people want to work if is located where they are and it is the kind of work they want. If it isn't too many say why take that job when I can get unemployment and be better off than working. Another important factor is that too many don't have the education and skills needed for the jobs. Why don't the companies hire and train the workers? It sounds like it would be simple but here are some of the reasons they don't. It is expensive to hire new employees, even if they have the necessary skills. Even when companies want to train workers too often the individuals don't have the ability to read and do simple arithmetic which would enable them to learn the skills needed for the job. Remember companies were designed to produce products and make a profit. The task has become more difficult in this country because of the taxes, regulations and now the mandated health care program.

Companies have determined that to survive they are going to have to reduce expenses. They are doing this by moving production facilities overseas and automating operations where ever possible. Then because of the health program requirements they will only hire or reduce the number of employee necessary to keep them below the point where there would be an increase cost of health benefits.

In 1949 I wrote an article for a sociology class predicting social problems the country were going to face. The article was titled "The Social Time Bomb". This was before we had industrial robots and the computers, lasers and other technological equipment to make automation work. At that time I predicted that industrial automation would create a tremendous social problem for the country as we will be able to manufacture most of the things we need cheaper and with few workers. In fact many workers will not be needed and will always be unemployed. Only the industrialization and world trade expansion has delayed it temporally. It appears now that it is going to accelerate the problem. Because of too much government attempt to manage the economy it is forcing companies to do whatever is necessary to survive and as a result manufacturing is rapidly becoming automated. The need for unskilled workers is decreasing and increasing for skilled workers.

What can be done to increase more jobs and reduce unemployment? The first step is to reduce unemployment benefits for all, except those who are severally physically or mentally disable, to a maximum of six weeks. After six weeks the government will provide them a job working developing and improving the country's infrastructure and other needs. Individuals would be paid one dollar above the minimum wage but they would be obligated to pay taxes and health benefits the same if they had a job with a private company. They would be assigned according to their qualifications and location to a community organization, local or state agency, or to some federal agency such as the National Forest Service. These agencies would be responsible for supervising and evaluating the individual's performance. If the individual's performance is poor enough to justify dismissal the individual will have a onetime choice,

he/she may choose to be dismissed without any benefits or be eligible for additional unemployment benefits or they may accept assignment in another location with a different agency with the understanding that if their performance is substandard they will be dismissed with no unemployment or any other benefits.

Individuals who have a good work record may apply for technical training after one month. If they are accepted by an approved training agency government will pay the tuition and the individual will receive the same pay, one dollar above the minimum wage, as if they were working. They may have up to six months in a training program. The training program director will evaluate their work and progress weekly. This report will be submitted weekly to the supervising agency. Either the training program director or the supervising agent may determine if their work and progress toward achieving the skill is satisfactory. They will decide whether the individual may continue in the program, be transferred to another program or be dismissed.

Such a program will help to reduce the unemployment problem in the short term but unless the federal, state, and local governments make some drastic changes in the tax programs, regulations and the public education system the employment problem will get worse.