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Hemphill: Government can create new jobs by getting out of the way

By Allen Polk Hemphill

San Diego City Councilman and mayoral candidate Carl DeMaio last week published his team approach to the creation of jobs in San Diego. What I am not certain of is whether anyone except DeMaio actually has any real interest in job creation.

The president appointed a committee on jobs, headed by the CEO of General Electric, Jeffrey Immelt. It is "studying the

problem." (Like the president's debt commission, it will be ignored.) As the president's spokesman admitted, the White House does not create jobs. Points for candor.



Allen Hemphill

The state of California sent a legislative team, headed by Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, to Texas — the most successful state at creating jobs. It too is "studying the problem."

Government only creates government jobs, and those jobs require that private jobs pay the salaries for the government jobs — so government jobs are counterproductive. They may be desirable, even necessary, but they are paid for by the taxes paid by private jobs. Public employees will tell you that they too pay taxes, but even the taxes they pay were first generated by private employers or employees.

Government can best help private industry create jobs by reducing the barriers to job development, but there is a cultural problem that cannot be easily overcome: Many who are interested in government work are enticed by the power they gain in their jobs. They are the same people who are interested in being hall monitors in school, and members of home owners' associations. (As president of several HOAs, my goal was to reduce the number of Nazis on the board, so that the homeowners could have quiet enjoyment of their homes without undue interference.)

Many of the barriers are state barriers: California Air Resources Board restrictions and Coastal Commissions are obvious examples. Delaying tactics of local environmental organizations such as Surfrider Foundation are barriers too.

These non-governmental organization (NGO) barriers are just as injurious as governmental barriers and need to be identified. Social/economic/governmental pressure needs to be brought to bear on the responsible NGOs for their obstructionism. The current kerfuffle about fireworks displays on San Diego and Mission Bay are an obvious signal to businesses that moving to, or beginning a business in, San Diego will face NGO opposition at every level. (The San Diego City Council should inform that particular lawyer that he will get a hearing on enforcement of the federal environmental problems on San Diego and Mission Bay as soon as he is successful in stopping the July 4 fireworks on the Mall in Washington, D.C., or the Boston Commons!)

But we have advantages — and one is weather. One need look only at the

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temperature map to see that Texas is sweltering in temperatures 20 degrees higher than San Diego. How Texas with its heat, cold, tornados, hurricanes and general bad weather (I grew up there) can compete with San Diego in job creation is a mystery, but I suspect that Texas overcomes the physical climate with a better business climate.

Ronald Reagan was right: Government is not the solution, it is the problem. Less of it means fewer problems to job creation.

(Full disclosure. I have contributed money to DeMaio's mayoral campaign.)

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