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President Obama Must Defend Safety Net

Recent unemployment reports have given the critics of President Obama another excuse to blame him for the economic problems of the country. Those most critical of him are the Republicans, the Tea Party and every conservative American and business interest who would like to put the interest of the wealthy above the interest of all Americans.

History shows us that unemployment has been no stranger to America since the Great Depression. During the Depression, President Roosevelt responded with a Public Works Administration program that put Americans to work on roads and other public projects; World War II geared up the War Machine in terms of manufacturing and production that provided jobs for all those not actively serving in the military; the G.I. Bill with loans for education and home purchases coincided with the Korean War and using the War Machine for business productivity while G.I. benefits went to those in school and not fighting in that undeclared war; the Vietnam War once again geared up the War Machine in terms of both using manpower in drafting men into service and producing all the items needed for a war.

With the end of the Vietnam War, once again America was faced with high unemployment. This time America responded with the Manpower Development and Training Act, providing job training along with veteran benefits to unemployed former soldiers and

VOICE AND VIEWPOINT

John E. Warren

training for those individuals with low job skills. These efforts coincided with the Great Society that Lyndon B. Johnson picked up after the death of John F. Kennedy. The Great Society brought a number of programs and services to help the unemployed and the under employment and funded the creation of community nonprofit organizations which also provided jobs. Manpower Development and Training Act was replaced by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act known as CETA. One of its strongest points was its Public Service Employment provisions under Title II that provided jobs for police, firemen and teachers at a time when cities were having great financial difficulties in the 1970s.

It was also during the mid-1970s that Congress passed the Humphrey/Hawkins Full Employment Act establishing triggers for the implementation of unemployment insurance benefits to areas reaching a 6.5 percent unemployment rate in pockets of single member statistical areas (SMSA) using census data. During periods of high unemployment, benefits were extended to help the chronically unemployed. President Obama engaged in the extension of such benefits last December when the Republicans held the measure hostage until they got tax benefits extended for the wealthy.



During the Great Depression of the 1930s middle-class Americans were so needy they needed food handouts

The point of all of this is that President Obama is not responsible for this period of high unemployment which will get even worse if the debt ceiling is not extended in the weeks ahead. The Republican leadership in the House of Representatives wants the cutting of entitlement programs which include social security, Medicare and aid to children and the elderly; It must be remembered that the legislative powers of the nation rest with the U.S. Congress under Article I of the U.S. Constitution. The President does not make laws; he signs them.

Finally, let us remember that U.S. businesses are sitting on over \$1 trillion in cash with which they could hire layoff or unemployed workers and boost the economy. But big businesses, like the Republicans who represent their

interests, have decided that President Obama, with his concern for all Americans, is a threat to the tax credits, subsidies and tax breaks. The oil companies, drug companies and insurance companies fear the fact they must change how they do business because of the Affordable Health Care Act and regulatory changes Obama has implemented.

President Obama, hold your ground on entitlements, health care and the domestic programs you have supported to benefit all Americans. Americans, regardless of your color or ethnic identity, if you are not wealthy, you are already a victim of the attacks on President Obama.

Dr. John E. Warren is the publisher and CEO of the San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Newspaper

Justice Says the Richest Must Pay Fair Share

Rarely have the divisions in American politics been more clear - or more onerous. In less than a month, on Aug. 2, if Congress refuses to raise the nation's \$14.3 trillion debt ceiling, the United States economy could be thrown into a fiscal tailspin that would eviscerate America's credit rating, lead to sky-high interest rates, rip a giant hole in the social safety net, jeopardize the well-being and savings of millions of working and middle class citizens and result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Majority leaders in the House and minority leaders in the Senate have taken the unprecedented step of linking a raise in the debt ceiling to the debate about deficit reduction and spending cuts. In effect, they are attempting to extort big cuts in programs benefiting working and middle class citizens while protecting exorbitant tax breaks for oil companies, corporate jet owners, and hedge fund managers. They say this is the only way they will agree to increase the debt limit. Fiscal experts such as Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke warn that if such extortions happen, severe disruptions will occur. Beginning Aug. 2, social security checks may be halted. Medicare, Medicaid, and unemployment benefits may

TO BE EQUAL

Marc Morial



stop. Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan may not get paid. And hundreds of thousands of government workers may be

laid off. This is no way to run the most trustworthy and powerful government in the world. And, it is no way to honor the hard work

Some in Congress suggest protecting the wealthiest Americans by taking from the middle class

ing on a sensible deficit reduction plan. Progress has been made. But recently several members of the so-called "Gang of Six"

The Obama administration is not oblivious to the need for spending cuts. For months, Vice President Joe Biden has led bipartisan negotiations aimed at agree-

working-class Americans, I would urge them also to consider the recommendations included in the National Urban League's 12-Point Jobs Plan, "Putting Urban American Back To Work." The creation of Urban Jobs Academies to train the critically unemployed, or Green Empowerment Zones to locate manufacturing jobs in urban areas, could ease the transition to spending cuts.

So far, the president and sensible members of Congress have stood firm in their refusal to give in to ideological extortion. As the President said in last week's press conference, "Any agreement to reduce our deficit is going to require tough decisions and balanced solutions. And, before we ask our seniors to pay more for health care, before we cut our children's education, before we sacrifice our commitment to the research and innovation that will help create more jobs in the economy, I think it's only fair to ask an oil company or a corporate jet owner that has done so well to give up a tax break that no other business enjoys." We agree. Raise the debt ceiling, but not on the backs of working and middle class Americans.

Marc H. Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League.

"We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation."

— *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

and sacrifices of its people.

It should be noted, that prior to this current showdown, the debt ceiling has routinely been raised almost 100 times since its estab-

walked out of the negotiations because of ideological resistance to balancing spending cuts for the middle class with ending some tax breaks for the wealthy.

As they defend the rights of