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A Hand, Not Hand-outs

By Sue Billings

Turning the economy around is the subjective focus that all are concerned about. But how does it get done is the burden that one man can't possibly achieve alone. Since America was built on the backs of those that were severely discriminated and plunged into a dependency on social welfare programs, the effort to remedy this massive ruins will take more than just a conversation and one political party's view.

Create jobs is the latest buzz words, but if we don't include jobs for all, and that includes those that have paid their debt to society by doing their time while incarcerated, now released, we will continue the cycle of dependency on social welfare and other means of taxpayers paying to keep some in a small circle of deprivation. Systemically those that are continually told that they are less and never given the opportunity to change are the ones that perpetuate the social welfare systems. We as Americans, regardless to ethnicity, must erase the stigmatism of allowing people to continually be punished for what they are truly sorry for and looking to be forgiven and brought back into the fold of society as a law abiding citizen

How do we accomplish this? Well for starters, I can list a few things that the government and President could openly address.

1. Restore the rights to all non-violent offenders that have proven that they want a second chance back in society (their right to vote, their right to not be labeled, their right to get a job without stating their past). This should be a 1 year review period, not a 5 – 7 years expungement; 5-7 years just allow for them not to be able to find employment, which in turn keeps them in a state of defiantness as well as discouraged, that sometimes sends them right back into old habits.
2. Remove from all applications, "have you ever been convicted of a crime"; once convicted, once paid the price of being incarcerated should automatically give you the second chance to just qualify for a position. If one has taken the time to go back to

school (technical or degreed) to get educated, that is the evidence that they are trying to reconcile their way back into society.

3. Make minimum wage higher for those that depend on the welfare system, but really want to work and are working can survive and pay their debt and live as does the rich; Everyone that has become rich has not worked as hard as those that continue to be the underdog, some of the rich has prospered on the backs of the impoverished; simply stated, make the minimum wage higher. When welfare is more appetizing than working to make a living, there is something wrong with the system.

Spending more isn't the answer. Making everyone accountable and giving them a positive outlook and a chance is the answer. Eliminate welfare, and give more money to those that are trying hard to work for a living, but can't make ends meet on what the government continually want to ration out, this keeps people dependent on hand-outs.

I don't have all the answers, but collectively as Americans, we can make a change – “YES WE CAN”.

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