It's Still The Economy, Stupid

by Phyllis Schlafly January 23, 2008

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Cohen & Grigsby Conference

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Bill Clinton was elected President in 1992 using James Carville's slogan, "It's the economy, stupid." The Democrats thus capitalized on a temporary economic recession during the last year of George H.W. Bush’s Administration.

Could 2008 be a repeat performance? The falling stock market, rising unemployment, skyrocketing oil prices, sub-prime mortgage collapse, and the Michigan recession have moved to front and center in the primaries.

Will the Republicans get it? Or will they just keep mouthing their tired mantras about free trade, the global economy, the world is flat, we have to be more competitive, send more students to community colleges, and teach more math and science?

Will the Democrats get it, or just keep mouthing their Big Government mantras that we need more taxpayer-paid social services? The liberal New York Times calls on us to "embrace globalization," and to compensate for job losses (which it speaks of with elitist disdain as "dislocations") by extended unemployment benefits, more progressive taxation, tax-paid lifetime re-training of workers,

socialized medicine, and more income handouts to low-wage workers through the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit).

The private enterprise system did not cause the loss of jobs. It's the result of bad U.S. policies and one-sided trade agreements that allow foreign governments to discriminate against American workers and products.

It's a very bad U.S. policy to invite millions of illegal aliens to come into the U.S., take low-wage jobs, and cash in on the social benefits that U.S. taxpayers generously provide to low-income households (estimated by the Heritage Foundation at a net cost of $20,000 per year).

It's also a very bad U.S. policy to tolerate the H-1B and L-1 racket that is bringing in hundreds of thousands of skilled foreigners, particularly from Asia, to take jobs away from Americans. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) says that the H-1B program is "now replacing the U.S. labor force."

The public is falsely led to believe that only 65,000 H-1B visas are permitted per year to take jobs for which no American can be found. The true figure is closer to 400,000 annually, because the number is increased by an additional 20,000 foreigners who get graduate degrees from U.S. universities, by foreigners who are completely exempt from the count because they work for research, educational or non-profits, and by 315,000 L-1 visas for which there is no cap at all.

The specific purpose of L-1 visas is to allow multinational companies to transfer managers and specialists within the company for a limited time. The high number now issued annually indicates that the multinationals are abusing L-1s as a back door to bring in lower-paid workers, not for a legitimate rotation of managers and specialized employees.

Tata Consultancy, for example, obtained 4,887 L-1s in fiscal 2006. Tata refused to answer questions from the tech journal InfoWorld, which called the H-1B/L-1 racket the fifth most underreported tech story of 2007.

Neither the H-1B nor the L-1 foreigners are expected to take permanent jobs or to get residency in the United States. But no one keeps track of whether or not they go home when their visas expire.

We can thank YouTube for posting on the web a portion of a conference at which immigration lawyers train employers on how to side-step immigration law. The blunt advice dished out by Lawrence Lebowitz of Cohen & Grigsby was: "Our goal is clearly not to find a qualified U.S. worker. . . .Our objective is to get this person a green card."

Lebowitz also advised employers to find a place to advertise for U.S. workers where you will be "complying with the law" but hoping "not to find qualified and interested worker applicants."

Jobs losses are also caused by unfair trade agreements signed by our government which encourage corporations to close U.S. plants and move their production overseas. Chinese laborers, working under slave-labor conditions, can be hired for 30 cents an hour.

In addition to the advantage of cheap labor, our trade agreements permit massive product discrimination against us. Foreign governments are allowed to subsidize the goods they EXport to us, but also allowed to impose heavy taxes on goods they IMport from us.

Free trade was supposed to result in a mutual reduction of tariffs so goods can move freely around the world. It didn't work out that way because our trade agreements do not require a level playing field.

The United States cut our tariffs, but foreign countries substituted border taxes that are just as high as the tariffs they supposedly eliminated. They hide these border taxes under the moniker Value Added Tax, and it adds up to playing us for Uncle Sucker.

Now that millions of Americans have lost the good jobs they thought had put them on the path to living the American dream, the voters are waking up. Presidential candidates beware: we want to know what you will do to protect American jobs.