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Job Guarantee for a Safe Community

I greatly enjoy going on walks with my family around town, though I have noticed many shared areas like parks and sidewalks are unkempt and sometimes unsafe. In some areas, sidewalks are in shambles which poses a trip hazard, and plants are overgrown which denies the use of the sidewalk. Also, there is trash along roadways and decaying plant buildup around fencing and buildings. Some of these issues are due to the resident not having the ability to do necessary yard work. Jobs could be created to solve and manage these issues, and these jobs will be part of a program which improves the economic and social lives of people while also improving the environment.

My proposal is to create a job guarantee program where people are employed at a livable wage with adequate benefits. The program would offer an unlimited supply of quality jobs to any person seeking employment. The jobs include, but are not limited to, cleaning up and repairing public areas, office work, management, or whatever the task requires. These jobs differ in difficulty and skills needed, so it creates an engaging environment for all people which also provides opportunities for personal growth. This work would be targeted to shared and public property, however this could also be provided for those who cannot afford to pour cement for a new sidewalk, obtain safe branch removal, or obtain other services which impact public interests.

The service would be requested and democratically considered to assist members of the community. The program can adapt and change to the needs of the society. Since the community can make requests which will be considered democratically, they are able to solve problems on a local scale. The goal is to make the area clean, safe, and habitable. This ensures meaningful work is done, complaints are solved, and services can be provided to people who cannot afford or perform the work. The program would offer different tiers of employment which would cater to people's preferences, skills, and talents.

The wasting of human resources is a tragic inefficiency of the current (un)employment system. The system of tiers in the program would offer and create positions which require very little or no training, some training, heavy training, experience, education, or a combination of qualifications. These efforts will be done so the talents, experience, and efforts of people are not wasted. Management positions would be required along with the laborers. These management positions would be more demanding, which increases the difficulty of the job, but the position will also be higher paid. Having multiple tiers of difficulty may be a better allocation of human resources. Positions can be created depending on a person's skills if the position would be useful. For example, more caring people could be placed in a position which assists those who wish to apply, or similarly people who speak multiple languages may be helpful for applicants. Another example would be a person with a bachelor's degree in marketing who wishes to be employed. A job can be created for this person where he or she promotes the program through advertising and helps people learn how to apply. People will be individually evaluated to find what position best suits them.

This level of individual attention to figure out an individual's skill set, experience, and interests seems impossible for a job guarantee program which would employ large amounts of

people. There is fascinating AI which is making this highly individualized attention possible for a large scale. While the hiring process is not likely to be completely automated, an AI hiring system can help sift through applicants and give a placement test. This process would help people find a job opening that best suits them, whether it's full or part-time, in an office or outdoors. The program would also help with tuition and related expenses, so an AI system would greatly help with scheduling and work flexibility for students. However, these systems often have forms of bias against certain groups (Faragher, 2019). This would need to be addressed and solved before an AI system could do placement for this program. This means the program may have to hire high skill tech jobs for programming the best system. This shows how the program would offer regular full-time employment to support the program.

The current system accepts unemployment as a necessary evil. I contest this notion, as it gives businesses more bargaining power over labor. This program would effectively eliminate involuntary unemployment which gives labor more bargaining power. More specifically, this program would deal with the effects of cyclical and structural unemployment while limiting other types, like frictional unemployment. The current bargaining power of business also means greater control over wages and working conditions. The program would set a highly effective minimum wage and work quality standard. The greater bargaining power gives businesses the ability to pay lower wages and provide the bare minimum for its employees.

Wages and benefits will be set in a way which supports families and social reproduction. Wages should and will vary from area to area, as the cost of living may differ wildly. However, the lowest wage rate would be around \$15 per hour. More importantly, all employees will be given various benefits. A few of these include good medical insurance (which includes medical, prescription, dental, and eye care), paid vacation, paid sick and family leave, and flexible work

schedules. These benefits will be structured in a way that allows for proper childcare and care for others. Businesses will have to compete with these benefits to hire workers.

Employers are more likely to improve quality of work if they have true competition. Involuntary unemployment means some employers do not have to improve working conditions. If people are lined up, ready to take a job, why should a company work harder to attract employees? This program would place pressure to improve working conditions even in areas of low unemployment. I grew up in a very small town in rural Ohio, where unemployment is nearly zero. If one wants a job, then they can find a job. The area is largely agricultural, which provides an unfillable number of jobs. Agricultural work is not the typical nine-to-five many people want, so many turn to industrial work. Some of these factories, specifically die casting, have awful working conditions. A program like this which offers good pay and benefits would place pressure on these businesses to make the necessary investments to improve working conditions. This program will also give business to local and small businesses through a special contracting system.

This program would work with local businesses when needed to complete tasks which require machinery, specialized tools, or complex training. This program would include a hybrid private-public contracting system where government provides the workers who work for an existing applicable company to perform the needed task. For example, say concrete needs poured to create a sidewalk. The government would contract out the job. The winner of the contract will be paid to train the government employees, provide necessary tools and machinery (which may include workers with proper certification to operate machinery), and provide managers if another worker cannot be easily trained to do the task. This gives business to local and perhaps small businesses. This system enables already trained and experienced workers to train the government

employees. The company would continue wage labor, as the government employees would only work for a government contract, not a private one. In other words, a private company which participates in this can still continue private business. This would effectively expand the business and potentially create more private jobs too.

A challenge this program would face is to find enough work for the people. This original proposal cannot contain each job which will be performed. This program will evolve to the changing needs of the society. The system of recommendations/complaints and its democratic consideration enables a community to do what is important to them and evolve with the changing times, while allowing the maximum amount jobs can be created. However, this issue remains as a hurdle for a job guarantee program.

This program could be partly paid for by updating old policy to reflect current values. Galvin (2020) expresses in dollars how much money this would put toward the program, "...(a) \$3.085 trillion by eliminating all fossil fuel subsidies, increasing taxation of fossil fuel companies and increasing polluter fines and litigation; (b) \$1.215 trillion from reducing military expenses related to protecting oil-shipping routes; (c) \$6.4 trillion from selling energy via power marketing authorities; and (d) \$2.3 trillion from income taxes on the 20 million new jobs created. Sanders also argues his GND will: (a) save \$1.31 trillion by reducing the need for what the US currently spends on public assistance programs, due to the creation of 20 million new jobs; and (b) raise a further \$2 trillion by making the wealthy and large corporations pay "their fair share" of taxes". The economic benefits gained from this program will effectively pay for the program after roughly 15 years (Galvin, 2020).

This program would have a positive economic, ecological, and social impact. This program would improve property values by improving neighborhoods. People will also have

increased utility from a better environment, less unemployment, income stability, the opportunity to get higher education, and more. A better environment is achieved by cleaning up trash and decreasing incentives for fossil fuels. Decreasing the incentives for fossil fuels makes it more expensive for these companies to operate. This gives corporations an incentive to find an alternative energy source which is sustainable. Decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels is an important step for environmental sustainability.

People's social environment is also positively impacted from the program. The program will reduce inequality and issues associated with it like obesity, reduced trust, mental illness, drug usage, increased murders/violence/crime, lower quality healthcare, lower life expectancy, more infant deaths, and unequal educational attainment (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2011). Educational attainment will also become more equal from the tuition assistance and flexible hours and scheduling the program provides. People will also experience better job satisfaction and more safety in the workplace and in public areas. If sidewalks are clear and do not pose a trip hazard, they are more likely to be used which keeps people off the road. This may increase people's use of public areas, so they are getting fulfillment and exercise. Overall, peoples' wellbeing will increase.

A job program to guarantee quality employment seems like a utopian solution to our economy's biggest issues. The program will offer employment for anybody who wants it, pay them well, and we would expect to see positive repercussions for almost all people. These effects and more information about a job guarantee program is well discussed in Forstater (2004), Tcherneva (2018), and Wray (2016). However, the positive impacts are theorized or outline the possible benefits a job program could have. An actual job guarantee program may correct some

of the issues outlined but not others. The real impacts can only truly be known after we observe them.

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