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Congressional Progressive Caucus presents jobs plan

By Marilyn Bechtel

Following up on speak outs it organized around the country during the summer the Congressional Progressive Caucus Sept. 13 unveiled a far-reaching Rebuild the American Dream Framework, focusing on six areas for immediate and long-term job creation.

Calling the jobs proposal President Obama presented to the country last week “comprehensive,” and “a wonderful first step,” CPC co-chair Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., told a Washington DC press conference, “We’d like to make it bigger.” Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., told reporters, “It was so important to get out of Washington DC, and to participate with people, to listen to the stories so many people have told us, and to bring back their ideas and their thoughts about what we need to do next.”

The CPC’s Framework focuses on six areas:

*Make it in America Again: Develop a national plan for manufacturing, to reopen U.S. factories.

*Rebuild America: A national investment bank to rebuild roads, bridges, locks and dams, connect and empower the country with fiber optic cable.

*Jobs for the Next Generation: Make “the guarantee of a good American job real for every young person,” through “direct employment in the

public sector and incentives for hiring in the non-profit sector and private sector.” Provide stipends to workers and youth in job training programs.

*Lead the Green Industrial Revolution: Invest in research and innovation, provide investment incentives to create jobs in the U.S., “build a modern smart grid that can deliver efficiency and clean energy.”

*Not Just Jobs - Good Jobs: Make sure workers are free to organize, ensure businesses obey labor laws, reward businesses that pay well and respect labor rights. Assure help and services for



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long-term unemployed.

*Fair Taxes - Shared Sacrifice: Make sure corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share.

Earlier this year the CPC introduced its Peoples Budget featuring many provisions similar to those in the new jobs framework.

End the Bush-era tax giveaways, close corporate loopholes and tax breaks for companies shipping jobs overseas. Crack down on offshore tax havens, curb Wall St. speculators and outrageous banker bonuses.

Calling mass unemployment “a national emergency and a human calamity that is damaging all facets of the United States economy,” the CPC pointed out that some 25 million people are unemployed, under employed or have given up looking for work. It said unemployment among African Americans - nearly 17 percent, and Latinos – over 11 percent, far outstrips the official national average of 9.1 percent.

“America should work again for people who work for a a living,” the CPC said. “Working Americans should use their strength in numbers to counter corporate dollars.”

Also on Sept. 13, Lee, Grijalva and Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., introduced the Prioritize Emergency Job Creation Act, to amend the recently passed Budget Control Act to allow emergency appropriations for job creation. The Budget Control Act caps funds spent through the annual appro-

priations process but does not limit spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Calling the jobs crisis “a national emergency,” Lee said, “We should end the wars and cut back on bloated Pentagon spending – and invest that savings in a robust jobs plan to get our nation back to work.”

Earlier this year the CPC introduced its Peoples Budget featuring many provisions similar to those in the new jobs framework.

On Aug. 10, CPC member Rep. Jan Schakowski, D-Ill., introduced a related measure, the Emergency Jobs to Restore the American Dream Act, to put over 2.2 million people to work for two years, in jobs directly created by the government.

Included would be jobs in areas including school improvement, police and firefighter services, local health care, Early Head Start and park improvement. The measure’s \$227 billion cost would be funded by another bill Schakowski has introduced, to raise taxes on the very wealthy.



Marilyn Bechtel is a writer for the People’s World.

Republican debates are showing that their approach to almost everything is welfare for the rich.

Choosing common sense over lunacy

By PW Editorial Board

Millions watching the recent Republican presidential candidate debates were horrified when the tea party audience shouted “yeah” and cheered at the suggestion that a sick man with no health insurance should be allowed to die.

The awful scene followed candidate Ron Paul’s answer to a hypothetical question about what he would do in a situation where a healthy man who chose not to be insured, then got sick and couldn’t afford the medical care he needed to save his life.

Paul’s response that life is about making choices and that the man could have chosen to purchase a major medical plan was actually even more callous than the crude cheering that came from the assembled teabaggers.

The basic problem that exists regarding health insurance is that millions who have the insurance they want, by virtue of their jobs or by choosing to pay for it on their own, are losing that insurance. The basic problem for millions of others is that they cannot afford to pay for any health insurance.

In Dr. Ron Paul’s and GOP frontrunner Rick Perry’s Texas a quarter of the population has no coverage at all.

The GOP candidates all say they are for rug-

ged individualism and self reliance, rather than government handouts and welfare. In reality, the Republican debates are showing that their approach to almost everything is welfare for the rich but “self reliance” for the working-class majority and the poor.

When it comes to health care, that Republican approach actually ignores the needs of almost everyone in society, whether they be rich, poor or in-between.

One medical catastrophe destroys not just one human being but can destroy his or her whole family or even an entire community. Viruses don’t discriminate, they give everyone an equal opportunity to get sick or die.

Human experience shows that the health of each individual also requires dealing with health care in a way that allows everyone to become healthy. Pretending health care for all is nothing more than letting each one of us make our own choices, particularly when we can’t afford the available choices, is nothing short of lunacy.

As long as big money and power politics are behind the insanity we’ve seen on the Republican debate stages, everyone’s health is in danger. Protecting our health will require a massive mobilization for the 2012 elections to make sure common sense, not lunacy, prevails.

Jackson: Jobs needed as state cuts endanger lives

By John Rummel

Speaking at a Sept. 9 Detroit Rainbow Push press conference, Rev. Jesse Jackson sharply criticized Michigan's newly enacted 48-month cap on cash assistance and the "excruciating pain" it will cause.

The cutoff, passed by Lansing Republicans, takes effect in October and will immediately affect 12,600 families and 25,000 children. Jackson said families will be unable to eat and pay their light and heat bills declaring, "It's unfair, it's immoral, and we are not going to take it in the dark or in the cold."

Jackson said people want to move from welfare to work, but the requirements to make that transition are missing. Among those requirements are daycare, transportation, job training and a job, things Jackson said are either too costly or unavailable.

He noted the difficulty of finding work in Michigan. The number of long term unemployed has dramatically increased; 235,000 people have been out of work over six months. New jobs are virtually non-existent in cities like Detroit.

Referring to President Obama's address on jobs Jackson called it a "bold step" and said the president moved the conversation to where we have to go. "I hope Congress is listening," added Detroit pastor and NAACP President Wendell Anthony.

While Jackson said "direct jobs" are a better means than tax write-offs to stimulate the economy, we should embrace whatever means the president uses to create work.

Jackson noted that 100,000 homes are vacant in Detroit. Weatherizing and rebuilding those homes in this and other cities would put urban America back to work. The president referred to



such a program in his address.

Jackson spoke about the persistent patterns of racial discrimination and the resulting disparity in wealth, health, educational and unemployment amplifying the crisis in the black community. As an example, he said unemployment is near 9 percent nationally but closer to 30 percent within the black community. In Detroit, the figure is closer to 50 percent.

He also made a plea for disengagement from war and hoped that when the administration reviews Medicaid and Medicare, as the president said would be done, it also reviews the cost of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and other locations. "There is no basis for us becoming a nation of warmongers losing money, lives and honor. These wars have not made us safe," he added.

To see that the jobs bill is passed and to ease the crisis people are facing, Jackson cited the urgent need for large public demonstrations saying it was "time for labor, civil rights and the church to take our case back to the streets."

Unemployment is near 9 percent nationally but closer to 30 percent within the black community.

“Fighting for our jobs” in Chicago

By John Bachtell

Flanked by teachers, postal, transit, hotel and immigrant workers and veterans in Chicago, Rev. Jesse Jackson declared, “Enough is enough,” and called for a new people’s coalition to engage in mass demonstrations to protect workers’ rights and create jobs.

“It’s tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and job cuts for working-class Americans. We intend to escalate this struggle, to have massive demonstrations and if necessary civil disobedience to make our case” said Jackson.

The Sept. 10 demonstration was called in the face of mounting layoffs and attacks on public workers - and as President Obama introduced the American Jobs Act.

Speakers demanded the bill’s immediate passage to save the jobs of teachers, police and firefighters and put construction workers to work repairing the nation’s infrastructure.

“This is an important crossroads in our nation’s history,” said Susan Hurley, Chicago Jobs with Justice director. “We need to pass this plan and there’s no reason Republican representatives in Illinois and around the country should oppose it.

“We need to pass it, but we need to go much further,” said Hurley. “We need to create millions of jobs for the 20 million people out of work.”

Hurley called for the rich and “those who caused the crisis” to pay for jobs creation.

Those who spoke reflected the deep-seated anger over the mounting attacks of public and private sector workers. They blasted the lies being told by corporations and public officials and highlighted the commonalities of the struggles.

“We’re all in this fight,” said Unite Here member Ida Martinez. “We are the middle class.”

Escoger sentido común en vez de locura

Por Pepe Lozano

Quedaban asombrados millones de televidentes que vieron los debates más recientes entre los precandidatos republicanos a la presidencia cuando una audiencia de adeptos del Tea Party gritaba “¡Sí!” y aplaudía a una sugerencia de que debe ser abandonado a su suerte sin más un hombre enfermo que no tiene seguro médico.

Ocurrió este terrible escenario luego que respondía el precandidato Ron Paul a una pregunta hipotética sobre qué haría si se enferma un hombre sano que había decidido no tener seguro médico y que no alcanza a pagar el cuidado médico que necesita para salvar su vida.

La respuesta de Paul, de que la vida tiene que ver con tomar decisiones y que el hombre hubiera podido optar por comprar un plan de seguro médico para gastos mayores, resultaba hasta más insensible que los gritos rudos de la audiencia compuesta de partidarios del Tea Party.

El problema básico que existe con el seguro médico es que millones de personas que sí tienen el seguro que desean, sea gracias a sus empleos o sea porque lo pagan de su propia cuenta, ya están perdiendo esa cobertura. El problema básico para millones más es que no alcanzan a comprar ni el más mínimo seguro de salud.

Proclaman todos los precandidatos republicanos que están a favor del duro individualismo y la autorresponsabilidad en vez de la caridad gubernamental y los programas de bienestar social. Pero la realidad es que muestran los debates entre los precandidatos republicanos que su respuesta a casi todo es bienestar social para los ricos y autorresponsabilidad para la mayoría de clase trabajadora

y los pobres.

Y cuando se trata del cuidado de salud, desconoce la actitud republicana las necesidades de casi todos los integrantes de nuestra sociedad: ricos, pobres, y los de en medio.

Una sola catástrofe médica destruye no solo a un ser humano, pero bien puede destruir a toda su familia, o hasta a una comunidad entera. Cuando se multiplican las catástrofes médicas, puedan resultar devastadas una ciudad o una población entera. Una epidemia pueda amenazar a países enteros. Los virus no se discriminan; afectan a todos, a ricos y pobres con igual riesgo de enfermedad o muerte.

La experiencia universal nos comprueba que defender la salud de cada uno también exige preocuparse por el cuidado de salud colectivo de una manera que defienda la salubridad de todos. Pretender que el cuidado de salud no es más que dejarnos a cada uno en libertad para tomar nuestras propias decisiones, especialmente cuando no alcanzamos a pagar las opciones existentes, no es ni más ni menos que locura.

Pero esta locura es lo que oímos de los precandidatos republicana.

Y no hay que despreocuparse por las últimas encuestas de opinión pública que muestran que el Tea Party esté perdiendo apoyo. Mientras que el gran dinero y la política del poder estén tras esta locura que hemos visto en los escenarios de debate republicanos, queda en peligro la salud de todos. La protección de nuestra salubridad exige una movilización masiva para las elecciones del 2012 para asegurar que prevalezca el sentido común sobre una locura descontrolada.

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