

# Point of View

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## TO BE EQUAL

# MESSAGE TO CLINTON: MAKE GROWTH A PRIORITY

By John E. Jacob

The Clinton Administration is grappling with a basic question: what should its priority be — to cut the deficit or to grow the economy?

The answer seemed easy during the campaign — grow the

economy and the additional jobs and economic activity will generate enough revenues to cut the deficit in half within four years.

Well, like all easy answers, it turns out not to be quite right. Deficit projections indicate the problem is worse than it ap-

peared. And the numbers that added up last fall don't add up in the cold light of a Washington winter.

So, we're seeing some signs of backtracking. The promised middle class tax cut will be put on the back burner — which

makes sense given the nation's needs.

And news reports indicate that deficit reduction may gain the upper hand, with growth policies de-emphasized. If that's correct, it would be a big mistake.

Not that the deficit shouldn't be taken seriously. If it spins out of control — a very real danger — we could be in for very tough times. Some warn of a major Depression, and those warnings should not be taken lightly.

But making deficit-cutting the priority could be just as bad. It would mean high unemployment and ultimately, more debt, since a stagnant economy won't generate the revenues to cut the deficit.

So the soundest policy is to go for growth — jump-start the economy with a Marshall Plan for America that generates jobs and puts our neglected resources back to work.

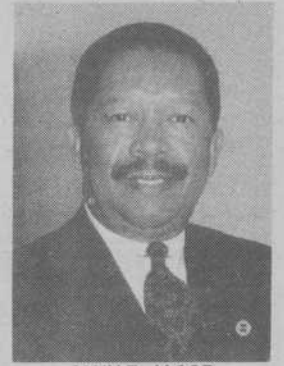
Coupled with new tax revenues and reform of escalating health care costs, that growth policy offers a better chance to get out from under the deficit problem in the long run.

It's possible — no one knows for sure — that such a policy could add slightly to the giant deficit in the short-term.

The fear is that such an increase might panic the international bond markets and jack up interest rates. But not necessarily.

It's probable that a growth plan coupled with a long-term deficit reduction plan would give the new Administration a window of a couple of years to make the strategy work.

Even if that means the deficit won't be cut in half in four years, as the original Clinton plan suggested, that should not be a major problem. The important thing is to change the long-term upward trajectory of the deficit.



JOHN E. JACOB

Strong economic growth would reduce the deficit over time, and that's what counts, not the specific dollar amount of the reduction.

A fixation on swiftly cutting the deficit will also force the president into an untenable political position, since he was elected to get the economy moving again.

Clearly, people expect stronger economic growth, more jobs, and a stronger national competitive position. That can only happen if government invests in job-creating infrastructure programs, educating all of our children, and building a world-class workforce.

As Dr. Billy J. Tidwell points out in an article in the National Urban League's annual State of Black America report, there is today a serious misfit between the skills of African American workers and the shifting occupational structure in our economy.

We can't compete in the global economy unless that fit improves, and that means investing in our human resources. Long-term, that's the real solution to the deficit dilemma.

So the Administration's priority must be to secure long-term economic growth, which is also the surest way to secure long-term deficit reduction.



## POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams



## HOLD THAT TIGER

On last Monday night Gov. Bob Miller delivered the traditional "State of the State" speech in the chambers of the state Assembly. Miller's message was clearly in one direction. Trim the fat and no new taxes. Combine that with a pounding of the State Industrial Insurance System, including abolishing its board of directors. The reason? Miller says, "Our budget continues to be severely strained. Now more than ever, the obligation we all must accept is to spend money wisely and spend it frugally." This is good, but, how will all this "hold the line" talk affect those already looking up from the bottom? How long are they expected to continue to "hold on." In far too many cases many people are asked to hold on when in fact, they have nothing to hold on to. Will cutting the fat cut some people's throat?

Lets take a glance at what is proposed for the next two years. First, cut all spending except for elementary education, Medicaid and mental health services which will be kept at or below the 1991-93 levels of 75 million dollars. Secondly, no new taxes except a \$3 million increase for operators of limited-number of slot routes.

The governor also proposes to exempt businesses with four employees or less from the state business tax,

and lifting the cap on the tax for the states biggest companies. Next, the governor looks to chop state government from 47 agencies and 170 boards to 13 agencies, three boards and four commissions. The savings: \$27 million.

Taking a look at prisons, the Gov.'s proposal is hoping to save \$47 million over two years by letting inmates go free earlier than planned. Miller will be asking for legislative authority to release some convicts early once prisons reach 98% of emergency capacity. Under the plan, eligible inmates would qualify for parole about three months earlier than usual.

This whole plan is designed to make state government less costly and more efficient, provide needed help for education, mental health and welfare, and above all, save SIIIS from bankruptcy.

This idea about "holding the line" may be good when we look at the condition of the economy. But the reality remains that 1 of every 4 African Americans either can't find a job or is working part-time. What are they to hold on to? I hope that governor hasn't forgotten April 30th 1992.

Just like Bill Clinton campaigned for change and hope for the low and moderate income, it would be in Miller's best interest to talk and walk the game of inclusiveness. The timing could have been better for Miller on Monday night, coming off the

heels of the death of former justice Thurgood Marshall, to make a serious pitch for those who are holding on at the lower levels.

On another note, the Assembly and State Senate both approved ACR 7 which pays tribute to Thurgood Marshall. I was proud to write and sponsor the Marshall resolution. Thurgood Marshall has no holiday established in his honor. He did not break the color line in baseball. He never ran for president. Unlike Dr. King, Jackie Robinson and Jesse Jackson, he was never a household name. Yet history will record him as one of the most influential leaders of the 20th Century for human rights and equality.

Like King, he fought the battle in the trenches in the South, where the dangers were often and the battles were long.

As a young attorney in the 1930's and 40's, he brought before the courts one civil rights case after another. Untiring, never giving up, sure of his cause, he began to rewrite case law in one victory after another. Even the losses added up to a powerful statement. And in 1954 when Brown vs the Board of Education came, he was ready, and so was the all-white U.S. Supreme Court, to which he had brought one case after another for a decade.

In a unanimous vote, the high court outlawed segregation in public schools. For itself and



Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

for what it did for other civil rights cases, Brown was probably the single most important civil rights case this century.

Like Robinson, Marshall broke the color line, this time on the Supreme Court in 1967. A major victory.

Like Jackson, he preached from the pulpit, except the pulpit was a bench in the court house. In opinion after opinion, he seared the conscience of the nation. He spoke for every citizen under the constitution of the U.S.: for teachers, so they could speak out without the fear of losing their jobs; for inmates and for all defendants, to forbid the government from withholding information favorable to their case.

He won. He lost. The growth of conservatism placed him in a minority on the the bench. But through it all he persevered a beacon of integrity, a light on the hill for all people.

Even though many across America are saddened by the lost of Thurgood Marshall, we should find some happiness at least, because he lived the type of no-sell-out life that will live forever.

And from the looks of things here in Nevada, we will all have to look to the courageous spirit of Marshall to "hold the line."

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