

Comment on Economics: People are Hurting

By Maarten de Kadt, CRDC Member

September saw another significant increase in unemployment with the official national unemployment rate going to 9.8 percent. October rates, to be announced November 6, promise to be worse. New York City's unemployment rate for August was 10.3 percent. Notwithstanding pundits who say the economy has moved back from the brink as a result of the federal stimulus monies, the economy remains in deep trouble.

Economist Paul Krugman tells us the \$787 billion in federal stimulation money is not nearly enough. The rising unemployment rate is itself sufficient evidence that more help is needed. Analysts measuring general trends describe the unemployment rate as a lagging indicator of the state of the economy. However, for those not working unemployment is a condition affecting daily life – a fact, not an indicator.

The official national unemployment rate is reported on the first Friday of every month. It leaves out a significant number of people who are so discouraged that they are no longer looking for work. Those who have settled for part-time work are also not counted in the official rate.

If these folks were included, the September unemployment rate would be about 17 percent. And Krugman tells us without further stimulus the official unemployment rate will average 9.8 percent in 2010, 8.6 percent in 2011 and 7.7 percent in 2012. A lot of people who want work will not be able to find work for quite some time to come.

Even with its deficiencies, the official unemployment rate depicts the economic

state of affairs. If the definition of a functioning economy is one that provides jobs for all those working people who want to work, then the American economy should have jobs for the 15 million people who are unemployed. On top of that, the volume of goods and services being produced within this economy is not close to the volume that could be produced if productive capacity was being fully utilized. We have an unemployment crisis and a crisis of under utilization of productive capacity.

So the rising unemployment rate tells us the US economy is not doing well as it is not providing for its people. In this view unemployment is extremely personal. Two not-for-profits with which I am familiar have had to cut back their activities. One chose to furlough its employees one day a week reducing their workweek from five to four days, commensurately reducing their payroll. One employee of this organization told me that the amount of work he does has not decreased. So the cut back amounts to a speed up (not a reduction of activities at all).

The other organization laid off three quarters of its staff. In comparison to the 263,000 jobs lost in September, the numbers of employees involved in these two organizations is very small. But as we come into contact with people who have lost jobs or had their salaries reduced the state of the economy becomes very personal.

These workers are hurting. The economy will not have recovered until they are all back at work – full time. Remember

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday November 19, 2009
7:00PM

Hudson Guild, 441 West 26th St.
(btwn. 9th and 10th Avenues)

ON THE AGENDA:

Tom Robbins, an award-winning journalist, has been covering politics, labor and organized crime in New York for over thirty years. Since 2000, he has been a staff writer for the *Village Voice*, following a long reporting stint at the *Daily News*.

His topic at our meeting will be our most recent city elections (including the runups) and how the outcomes will affect New York's political future.

when the numbers are announced in November, even if the jobs lost in October are fewer than those lost in September (a good sign for the overall economy), each job lost represents an additional person who cannot find a job. Each job lost is another person hurting. It is personal.

While the stock market has recovered somewhat, and profits are improving somewhat, the lives of working people without jobs remain very tenuous. Clearly the economy needs additional stimulus some of which should go to public spending on infrastructure projects leading to the employment of workers. But more money should be set aside to aid those in the city's hardest hit neighborhoods who have lost jobs, who want to work but cannot find work.

REPORT: From Our Elected Officials

Carolyn Maloney

14th Congressional District (East Side Part Of 75 AD)

The Senate passed an inclusive hate crimes bill which includes Cong. Maloney's provision to measure gender-based hate crimes. The legislation will give state and local law enforcement the resources to prevent and prosecute crimes of violence committed because of a victim's real or perceived sexual orientation, race, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or gender identity. It will also require the FBI and local law enforcement to report and compile statistics on the incidence of gender-based hate nationwide crimes.

It incorporated elements of legislation previously introduced by Cong. Maloney as part of a larger package, the "Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crime Prevention Act" which was included in the Defense Authorization bill passed by the house in early October and then by the Senate late October.

Christine C. Quinn

3rd CD, Speaker Of The City Council

Speaker Quinn and the Graffiti Free NYC Program are committed to helping our neighborhoods become "graffiti free". Graffiti Free NYC is a free graffiti removal program that works to combat graffiti in communities throughout the City. The Mayors Community Affairs Unit works closely with a team of city agencies to implement Graffiti Free NYC.

To find out about the Graffiti Free bill and how you can participate visit <http://nyc.gov/graffitifreenyc>. Speaker Quinn's office has forms to track graffiti in your neighborhood. Phone her office 212-564-7757 and ask for Melanie Larocca, who can email you copies of the form that is needed to make a report.

Let's keep NY Beautiful!

Governor Paterson Proposes Deficit Reduction Plan

Aggressive, Across-the-Board Spending Reductions Represent Tough Choices Necessary to put New York

on the Road to Recovery — Major Structural Reforms Would Dramatically Lower Future Taxpayer Costs

Governor David A. Paterson today outlined a two-year, \$5.0 billion Deficit Reduction Plan that would eliminate the State's current-year budget gap without raising taxes, as well as institute major structural reforms — such as Tier V pension reform and a State spending cap — in order to improve New York's long-term fiscal health.

"The \$500 million in agency spending reductions I announced earlier this month represented an important first step, but I cannot eliminate this substantial deficit without the cooperation of my colleagues in the Legislature," Governor Paterson said. "During a time of uncommon difficulty, we need to work together for the common good and enact a consensus plan that helps us avoid the severe consequences faced by other states that failed to swiftly address their budget problems. This will mean hard and painful choices, but that is exactly the type of leadership New Yorkers deserve from their public officials."

Governor Paterson's two-year \$5.0 billion Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP) would have a current-year impact of \$3.0 billion in 2009-10 and a recurring impact of \$2.0 billion in 2010-11. Over the State's five-year financial plan period, it would produce cumulative savings of \$9.3 billion to help continue addressing the State's long-term structural deficit. To see Governor Paterson's announcement, log on to: http://pointers.audiovideoweb.com/stcasx/1c2win1559/GOV_10152009edit.wmv/play.asx.

Thomas K. Duane Working on Marriage Equality Act Passage

Senator Tom Duane continues to work with advocates and to actively lobby his colleagues to move the Marriage Equality Act on to the Senate floor, where he is confident it will pass.

As he told the *Washington Blade* when he was in the nation's capital for the National Equality March, he definitely expects a vote by the end of the year. And as he told Liz Benjamin of the *Daily Politics* blog today, "It's going to be on the floor."

That is a given in the entire conference's mind, including [Democratic Conference Leader] John Samson's. Senate Democratic Spokesperson Auston Shafran told Liz, "Senator Sampson is working with Tom Duane and speaking with members of both conferences about how to bring marriage equality to the floor."

Richard N. Gottfried

Assemblymember, 75 AD

Assemblymember Gottfried invites you to join him and sign up for Facebook so you can become one of his many Friends on his Facebook page. Check out his profile, photos, videos and events. Once you join Facebook you can create your own profile. To sign up follow the link below.

<http://www.facebook.com/p.php?i=1222821715&k=Z4G5Q3V3T2TF6BD1QAV4XWRWZVIB4XZBVPD&r>

If you already have an account, check Assemblymember Gottfried's Facebook page and become a Friend.

Where Do We Go From Here?

By Carla Nordstrom, CRDC Member

Health care legislation has been stalled in the Senate Finance Committee, Guantanamo remains open, troops are still fighting in Iraq, gays are still being thrown out of the military, and we still can't travel to Cuba. These are a few of the changes that were promised during the 2008 presidential campaign that have not happened. The situation has become what I call an obamanation — promises that are not kept because the big guy insists on working things out with a group of disingenuous thugs.

A group from the Chelsea Neighbors stand-up came over the other night to watch Rethink Afghanistan, Robert Greenwald's excellent movie about the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. Before watching this argument for bringing the troops home, our group talked about where to put our efforts and what is the best way to help bring about the changes we want.

One person suggested that we work with Congress to focus them on the promises that have been made and need to be kept. We reminded him that Democratic congress members have been obamanating for a lot longer than the new President. We decided that the best we can do is to continue standing on our corner of 24th Street and 8th Avenue for an hour every Tuesday evening to remind people that it is in everybody's best interest to end the wars.

While it is discouraging that positive changes are so slow in coming, there are a couple of rays of hope. There is a group of people with similar concerns to progressives, who are even more marginalized. At least progressives make the news when they attract the wrath of conservatives. Have you wondered what happened to moderate

Republicans? They have been shoved so far out in the cold that they have been all but forgotten.

Many moderate Republicans want health care reform and an end to the wars. There is also an interesting exhibit on Abraham Lincoln at the New York Historical Society which makes the point that New Yorkers were dissatisfied with Lincoln when he became president because he wasn't keeping his promises. He eventually changed his view on slavery and enacted the Emancipation Proclamation. Is it possible that it will be moderate Republicans and Abraham Lincoln who will help guide us forward?

By the way, I'm not referring to Olympia Snow and her manipulative approach to health care reform. Like all of her Republican colleagues she seems to be suffering from a bad case of thug mentality.

CRDC Annual Pot Luck Holiday Party

Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009, 5:00–8:00 pm

Dusk Lounge, 147 West 24th St; (bet. 6th & 7th Ave.)

Guests are asked to bring new hats, gloves or scarves for adults or children, which will be donated to needy families in our neighborhood.

For those who are not planning on attending, you may still contribute an item by bringing your contribution by to our November meeting or by calling/emailing Judy Richeimer: 212-243-3525/laurenstjude@yahoo.com

Noted above, our Annual Holiday Party is Potluck. So if you can contribute something, we thank you. If you can't, in the spirit of the Holidays we hope you will still join us.

Hudson Guild Annual Dr. Elliott Celebration

**Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009 — Cocktail Reception 6:30 p.m.
Program and dinner begin promptly at 7:15 p.m.**

**Hudson Guild Fulton Center
119 Ninth Avenue (between 17th and 18th Sts.)**

An evening honoring Chelsea's community leaders for their outstanding service and celebrating the life of our founder, Dr. John Lovejoy Elliott.

HONOREES:

Nat Yalowitz — Dorothy Epstein Community Service Award
CRDC Member Muriel Beach — Senior Service Award
Quanisha Davis — Youth Service Award

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