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I must take exception to Dan Rottenberg's column "Jobs Are A False Issue In The City Race." Key to a thriving urban community is its residents' economic welfare, and for almost everyone that results from adequate employment. A mayor and a city council by leadership in administrative action and local legislation, can be instrumental in restoring the 100,000 positions (43% of the city's manufacturing jobs) lost between 1970 and 1980. ^{PP} National economic policy, of course, plays a vital role, since unemployment is a national phenomenon, but here too a determined, farsighted mayor can influence federal legislation that will aid large cities.

Locally the mayor can facilitate ^{planning} ~~public~~ economic development and growth, bringing together government, business, labor and the community as equal partners in the planning process. Maintenance of a substantial manufacturing base is essential, providing the source of the upward mobility jobs which have furnished the route to economic security for the various waves of new entrants into the city. ^P With its distinct advantage of varied industries, Philadelphia - and its mayor - can initiate reindustrialization, blending manufacturing with services, high tech and energy industries. Post development and housing development, both new and renovated also contributing toward a truly sound economic base, and certainly here the mayor's ^{intensity and} expertise are strongly.

A mayor can take the leadership in promoting new concepts of

new industries. He can create the coalition needed to obtain public funding support for job creation.

The mayor can plan for balancing downtown development with the city's neighborhood job structure, once the major base of economic life. And he can insist that incentives to employers to expand present facilities or locate in our city receive trade-offs guaranteed new jobs for local residents and acceptance of labor standards.

Strengthening our schools, providing adequate housing and transportation and improving the environment - all within the mayor's province contribute to the success of job creation.

Furthermore, a knowledgeable mayor can develop programs for retrain workers displaced by plant closings and mass layoffs. He can lead support for federal legislation to provide these workers with an educational GI Bill of Rights. He can assure that training not be abused by political patronage as has sometimes been the case.

Job creation requires both aggressive action and creative leadership at the local level. The result of our upcoming municipal election can truly make a significant difference. Don't kid yourself, Mr. Rottenberg jobs are a major issue in the contest.

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Jobs are a false issue in the city race

By Dan Rottenberg

We've finally found a point on which all six of Philadelphia's declared mayoral candidates agree. As luck would have it, it's a point on which all six are mistaken.

All six candidates believe that the most important issue facing the next mayor is jobs. They believe this because their polls tell them — correctly, no doubt — that right now jobs are the major concern of most Philadelphians. If the polls reported that the most pressing concern of Philadelphians is improving their sex lives, then the Number One issue of the campaign would be sex instead of jobs. And in terms of direct impact, the mayor of Philadelphia can do only slightly more about jobs than he can do about sex.

This is so because the attraction — or departure — of jobs depends primarily on economic, sociological and demographic factors beyond the control of a mere mayor, no matter how capable. When a company chooses a location, it does so on the basis of its ability to function there profitably: It considers the cost and availability of space and labor, the quality of the local labor pool and the location's access to the company's suppliers and customers.

Other factors come into play too, of course — including any inducement the local government can offer. But if a company cannot operate here at maximum profitability, it will seek a home elsewhere, no matter how many tax abatements or low-interest loans a mayor offers. In such a situation, the mayor can no more attract jobs than he can lasso a truck with a string.

Nevertheless, Democratic candidate Wilson Goode recently announced that as mayor he will launch a major program to retrain Philadelphia's unemployed industrial workers in order to make them more attractive to potential employers. Goode also said he would establish a low-interest loan program

employers with financial inducements — ~~but only if the city's services and tax structure are healthy to begin with.~~

Nevertheless, the two Democratic candidates, at least, have so far preoccupied themselves with genuinely silly arguments about jobs. Goode's supporters blame Rizzo for the 90,000 jobs that left Philadelphia during Rizzo's eight years as mayor. Rizzo's supporters blame Goode for the 39,000 jobs that left Philadelphia during Goode's three years as the city's managing director.

To me, these statistics suggest that when it comes to jobs, a change in

city administrations means nothing. But the campaigners see things differently.

Rizzo says we wouldn't have lost so many jobs during his tenure if it hadn't been for the winding down of the Vietnam War. Goode's finance chairman, R. Stewart Rauch, says we wouldn't have lost so many jobs during Goode's tenure had it not been for "the severe national recession" of the 1980s.

The implication from both camps (and the Republican candidates as well) is clear: Vote for our man and he'll dramatically improve Philadelphia's employment picture. Vote for

our opponent and employers will flee the city.

No thinking person believes any such thing. That goes for the candidates themselves. A mayor should be concerned about jobs, and it's good that the candidates do care. But a mayor's effectiveness involves a realistic grasp of what he can and cannot do about a problem.

My vote goes to the first candidate to admit that jobs are a problem beyond his control. If he focuses his attentions elsewhere once he's in office, maybe he'll really accomplish something instead of chasing rainbows.