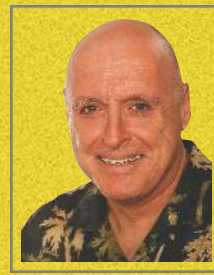


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1083 Economic Recovery is a Rocky Road

In the last 10 days, a number of things have come together to create today's commentary. I thought about all of it and started to write, but I'm still not sure how it's going to end. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's find out together, next, on The Extra Point.

Monday before last, I addressed a group of high school seniors on workplace issues, and how to get started. It went well, they seemed excited, and I was too. Hopefully, something I introduced them to will help them as well as a future employer.

A few days ago, the Guam Daily Post ran an article about the growing number of local residents who are thinking of leaving, because the cost of living here has gone from bad to ridiculous. On top of that, wages are low and people simply can't make ends meet.

They look across the ocean at places on the mainland where they can spend maybe 50 to 75% of what they pay in Guam, and have a higher standard of living. Many have left already, with many more either planning or thinking of it.

Next, Ray asked if this economy and these economic circumstances have made it a good time for senior citizens to re-enter the workforce.

I saw an article that brought up the Dept. of Labor figures, showing that over 50,000 people in Guam who could work, choose not to. Some don't want a job because they disagree with the local wages. Others may have found a way to get by without a job.

Yesterday, I was invited to attend the graduation at JFK. Another 300+ young people moving out into the adult world. How many will we see leave in frustration?

Employers are having trouble finding talent who can deliver results, while doing everything they

can to retain the good workers they now have.

The positive signs of visitors returning to our island gives everyone hope that we're on the way to getting back to a stable economy. My question is, when all the hotels fill up again, will they be able to find enough workers to support their business?

In the gubernatorial debate, Gov. Leon Guerrero mentioned that she had pushed for entry-level police officers to be paid \$18 per hour, up from \$11. The problem there is that a kid, newly hired at any fastfood outlet on the mainland, makes as much or more. Flip burgers or shovel out chicken or tacos, make 18 bucks. Put your life on the line on a crime-ridden island, 18 bucks. Anybody see a problem with that?

I've pounded this drum before and I'm going to do it again. It's time to vote for people who will do more than pay lip service to the idea of recruiting investment to Guam, in the form of companies who can provide 100 jobs, or 300.

It's the only way, repeat, the only way to ever reduce the size and economic burden of the Government of Guam. No politician will ever approve cutting public jobs, unless there is a decent place for people to transition to. If you believe different, I'd like to see what you're reading — or I'd like to have you drug tested.

If I were governor for a day, I'd thank Gov. Carl Gutierrez for his work at GVB, then pull him out of there, give him \$5 million from the piles of federal dollars we're sitting on, and have him build a team that can deliver 5,000, maybe 10,000 jobs in the next three to five years. He's certainly qualified to do it, and it's the key to finally putting Guam on solid financial ground, plus we'll be able to solve the GovGuam issue that has plagued us since ever since.

(Con't.)

Whether the next governor is named Lou, Mike, or Felix, they should do the same thing. Get a team on the road to make this happen.

If we could ever reduce the size of government, We'd also be able to lower taxes.

The pandemic changed just about everything the past two-and-a-half years. How many companies in Asia might be looking to expand into new opportunities? How many do we need to hit 5-10,000 jobs? It's doable, so let's finally do it.

Lastly, to answer Ray's question on if this is a good time for seniors? We need youth in the workplace, no doubt. They are the future leaders and we must start them out and grow them. To do that, you have to be able to keep them here.

On the other hand, companies need employees who possess both talent and experience. If 50,000 people don't want jobs, then seniors need to saddle up and get back to work. Employers should be happy to have you, even if you don't want to go full-time. You and they will figure it out.

Our best days absolutely can be yet to come, but we're going to have to quit screwing around and do things differently or we can flat forget about it.

Will we do it? Will Lou, or Mike, or Felix commit to the concept? Will any of them commit to the money and talent needed to do it?

More important: Will you demand that they do?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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