

Do We Put All Our Eggs in the Foxconn Basket?

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Politicians typically try to build the economy top down, showering tax breaks and subsidies on a few thousand of the richest among us or even just one company like Foxconn. The other way is from the bottom up, giving the whole population the means to do more for themselves. Bottom-up is best.

ALTOONA - To me, the most important question is not whether Foxconn is a good company. Or whether Foxconn can be trusted to deliver on its promises. Or whether the benefits of this deal for Wisconsin will at least equal the costs to the public when all is said and done. These are all very important questions, but not the most important.

The most important question is what basket should we be putting our eggs in? If we're going to spend \$3 billion, should it be to subsidize the expansion of one company from Taiwan, or should we spend it to empower the more than 5 million people who call Wisconsin home?

I think we should spend it on people. We should concentrate on developing the human potential of our own population. We should be equipping people to do for themselves rather than hoping that a multinational corporation from the other side of the world will work some magic for us.

Most new jobs get created by small businesses, not global conglomerates. But countless people with great ideas who dream of starting their own businesses too often feel trapped, with no choice but to stay in dead-end jobs because that's the only way they can hold on to health insurance for their families. Using our resources to guarantee health care for all and detach health insurance from employment would be one of the single best investments we could possibly make to unleash the creativity and ingenuity of our state's population. People would be free to be entrepreneurs and take their ideas and turn them into new businesses.

What's the best use for \$3 billion? What basket should we be putting our eggs in? The way I see it, the best investment is developing the potential of Wisconsin's population through things like health care for all, affordable and debt-free education and job training, and bringing 21st Century necessities like high-speed Internet to every household in the state.

There are two paths to building a sturdy economy. Politicians typically try doing it from the top down, showering tax breaks and state subsidies on a few thousand of the richest among us or even just one company in hopes that some of what they get will trickle down to the rest of us. The other way is from the bottom up, giving the whole population the means to do more for themselves and each other.

The bottom-up approach is the best bet.

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