

Guest column: Have great expectations - a governor can create jobs

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The nonpartisan Iowa Taxpayers Association (ITA) disagrees with Richard Doak's dour assertion that Iowans should expect that our next governor lessen the emphasis on job creation ("Deflated Expectations - Instead of Debating How to Improve Our Quality of Life, Candidates Pretend They Can Create Jobs," July 25 essay). ITA believes it is of paramount importance for the next governor to put the time, energy, and resources into ensuring a favorable business climate.

The next governor of Iowa, state legislators and economic development developers (at all levels) must work together to foster a business and economic climate that promotes growth in all of the industries in Iowa's diverse economy. Doak is mistaken when he says there is absolutely nothing that a governor can do about the economy to improve the job outlook. Across the country, governors are being creative to ensure existing business stays in their states, new business has every advantage possible, and start-ups and entrepreneurship are encouraged and supported.

A governor is the face of the state to those who are employed here or are seeking to relocate here. But most important, a governor is the CEO of the state and is charged with setting the tone on how business is done.

The taxpayers of Iowa foot a hefty bill every year with the hope that the governor and legislative leaders will work with the Iowa Department of Economic Development and the Iowa Workforce Development to put as many Iowans as possible to work. In this climate, their mission should be to assist businesses in every way possible.

Iowa's economy is separate from the national economy in that we are endowed with: (1) a skilled and industrious work force; (2) a robust manufacturing and agriculture sector; and (3) a blossoming financial services, information technology and life science sector. Job growth will return faster to Iowa and across the country when

decision makers stop putting impediments in the way of employers. An equitable, stable tax system as well as predictability on labor and regulatory issues are just the tip of the iceberg.

ITA agrees we must have first-class schools and universities as well as cultural amenities to enhance our quality of life. But we also must remember that having a job with a stable employer invested in Iowa is quality of life issue No. 1.

Iowa's best days are ahead if we focus on the ingredients for a successful business climate. Now is not the time to have deflated expectations, but rather a time to work together to put more Iowans to work. ITA hopes that a spirited dialogue between gubernatorial candidates Chet Culver and Terry Branstad on Iowa's long-term vision for sustainable 21st century jobs takes place in the weeks to come.

Great expectations are needed now more than ever.