**THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:**

**Let’s Make Job Creation A Priority**

Last month the Los Angeles City Council took an action that deserves our applause. Councilmembers Bernard Parks and Herb Wesson, Jr. introduced a motion to create a Local Business Retention and Attraction Task Force to explore the flight of businesses from both L.A. and California.

The resolution refers to a series of recent news articles and studies that “highlight the magnitude of this worrisome yet preventable trend.” It states that “excessive job losses, like those highlighted in these studies and news articles, are detrimental to the city’s revenue and can only worsen the existing structural deficit despite the few gains we have made through financial policies. Standards of living, which include public safety, recreational facilities, low taxes, etc., all become casualties to low government revenue. It is therefore imperative that the Council convene a task force to determine actions that can be taken to encourage new businesses to locate in the area, as well as maintain and grow local businesses in Los Angeles.”

I couldn’t have said it better. Councilmembers Parks and Wesson got it right. This is a “worrisome yet preventable trend.”

As someone who has recruited companies for cities in three other states, I’m amazed at how much business is taken for granted in California and in L.A.

Because of the incredible vision of past leaders who secured water rights for Southern California, dredged the two busiest ports in the country, built LAX, dreamed of great universities, created the entertainment industry, and welcomed immigrants from every nation on earth, L.A. is now one of the world’s major population and economic centers. But we are in real danger of losing our economic and cultural edge unless we cultivate a business-friendly environment and make job creation a top priority in our city and state.

During the last 25 years, the city of L.A. has added nearly 1 million residents but at the same time lost more than 50,000 jobs. Our population growth and rapid increase in property values have masked what is really happening in our economy. Companies with good jobs are leaving our city because the cost of doing business is higher here and they simply don’t feel appreciated. The exception, of course, is the entertainment industry, and welcomed immigrants from every nation on earth, L.A. is now one of the world’s major population and economic centers. But we are in real danger of losing our economic and cultural edge unless we cultivate a business-friendly environment and make job creation a top priority in our city and state.

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Each breakout session includes a panel of government and business leaders. We’ll discuss a plethora of issues: improving L.A.’s business climate; new developments and redevelopments in L.A.’s future; transportation and goods movement; housing and homelessness; education and workforce development; energy, water and environment; and public safety and emergency preparedness.

These discussions are integral to the future of our economy and our quality of life. Register now to participate in the free Access City Hall event.

We know your time is valuable, but how often do you have the chance to meet with government and business leaders who influence the policies that drive our economy and affect us all? So join us because L.A. will not reach its true potential without your valuable input and participation.

And that’s The Business Perspective.
The Business Perspective is a weekly opinion piece by Gary Toebben, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, produced with the input of Senior Policy Advisor Rusty Hammer.