

# For Workers, Mayoral Choice is Clear Blue

By MEL LEVY | Posted: Monday, October 21, 2013 5:00 pm

On Nov. 5 the people of New York City will elect their next Mayor. There are essentially two candidates: Bill de Blasio (Democrat) and Joe Lhota (Republican). Both candidates are running on the political philosophy of their parties. So let us examine these philosophies in light of what is best for our city and the people who live and work here both in and out of government service.

The Republicans say reduce spending and therefore lower taxes. They also say if you lower taxes on the wealthy, they will create jobs and so increase tax revenue for the city.

Sounds good, but it doesn't work.

## Top Down Won't Do It

People have to buy products to create a need for more production. This creates more jobs. If people do not have money to spend, they will not buy. So giving tax reductions to the wealthy will not increase consumer spending. To do so, the little people must have money to spend. So much for the core Republican philosophy.

The Democrats say spend to increase economic growth. This means a more active government to see to it that people somehow have more money to spend. Build and create industries in the United States, not ship them overseas. This is where tax incentives should go.

How much of your clothing is made here? How many TV sets are made here? Why is the term Clean Air scoffed at when it could create more jobs here? Jobs, not tax reductions, give people money to spend.

The Republican candidate says no way to retroactive pay raises for city workers who have gone for years with no raise while the cost of living has gone up. But the MTA wants to raise the fare in 2015 and 2017 while sitting on a \$1.9 billion surplus. A surplus that could have been much higher had the Republican candidate paid attention to the exorbitant profits made by the contractors and consultants made on MTA capital projects. This would have reduced debt service and could have increased the surplus by at least \$1 billion annually. Did anyone say fare decrease? That would put more money in people's pockets.

## Some Modest Proposals

The next Mayor has a real chance to make the city better.

1. Take back the Transit Authority. The TA has 90 percent of the passengers while the outlying counties control how and where the money and service go.

2. Take back the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. Why does the city get only 50 percent of the Authority's profit?
  3. Abolish the MTA. Its real-estate revenue would be better used in the city's pocket.
  4. Do more engineering work in-house. It is wrong to have a large percentage of municipal engineers spending their career seeing to it that consultants get their money on time. It is also cheaper to do the actual work in-house.
  5. Pay retroactive raises. The money will come from part of the savings from items 1-4.
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*Mr. Levy, a retired veteran of 35 years in the transit system who monitored the structural integrity of the subway system's below-river tunnels, is the former chairman of the Civil Service Technical Guild's New York City Transit chapter.*