



George T. Haley is a marketing professor at the University of New Haven. He said a major factor that makes Obama's economic plan a better option is four-year colleges are not necessarily the primary focus of the plan.

Instead, he believes Obama is paying equal attention to community colleges and other trade schools.

"If you look at local programs across the country, manufacturers have partnered with community colleges to train workers for them. They're not partnering with four-year universities," Haley said. "Obama is taking these same basic programs that manufacturers have opted for, and he's investing in them."

Haley added despite what Romney may say, his plan for education and employment focuses on corporate business rather than manufacturing.

"The programs Romney supports are programs that would favor Wall Street, not Main Street, U.S.A., not blue-collar workers and not manufacturers," he said.

However, others believe private sector knowledge can build programs that increase the likelihood of getting a job after graduation.

Richard M. Ebelin is an economics professor at Northwood University. He believes Obama's plan falls short because it has a lot of confidence in the government's ability to fund useful programs. He suggested people in the private sector have a better feel for employment needs.

"Who do you think knows most? Those in Washington, or those on the ground in different parts of the country who are trying to solve problems through which jobs can be created," Ebelin said.

Ebelin argued if money is kept in the hands of people with private sector experience, education could be specifically tailored toward the needs of changing industries.

Promoting domestic energy production is another selling point of Obama's economic plan.

He plans to open millions of acres for oil and gas searches but also develop wind, solar, clean coal, bio fuel and nuclear energy options. He already set new standards to double the fuel economy of cars by 2015 and pushes for 80 percent of the country's electricity come from clean sources by 2035.

The Obama campaign suggests he would push for clean energy manufacturing by offering tax credits.

Meanwhile, Romney argues Obama is neglecting the coal industry, which he believes can still provide a beneficial energy source and employ more people for the future.

Democrats believe Obama's plan is particularly effective because it includes multiple methods of domestic energy production, including coal and natural gas fracking.

"Romney is going to emphasize almost exclusively coal, natural gas fracking, and petroleum," Haley said. "But if you look at what's going on, we do need to have a significant amount of investment in clean energy."

Haley said although companies will develop clean energy options, they will not create the infrastructure to use them. Obama's plan allows for government investment to establish the needed production.

"The Obama campaign already loads the 'rhetoric dice,' by using terms like 'clean jobs' and 'clean energy,'" Ebelin argued. "The presumption is that those who don't agree with them obviously believe in 'dirty jobs,' creating pollution and killing people."

Opponents of Obama's plan argue the president's "green" ambitions will cost the country money and jobs.

"The Republicans have made a fundamentally correct observation," Ebelin said. "That is, the Solyndras and other solar and wind companies that the government has poured money into have often turned out to be failures, either going bankrupt or generating few or no jobs. In other words, it's a wasteful and inefficient way of finding effective energy sources."

Perhaps no policy issue may be more divisive for the candidates than "Obamacare."

After successfully passing the Affordable Care Act during his first term, Obama hopes to continue his healthcare makeover if he is reelected. The plan is scheduled to go into full swing in 2014, and the president's campaign argues it will "reign in insurance companies and give people more control over their healthcare."

The healthcare legislation was designed to ensure Americans can buy health insurance, regardless of any preexisting condition, and prevents discrimination so women don't pay higher premiums. The act also creates a "marketplace" to promote group rates and tax credits in the hope of lowering insurance prices.

Obamacare also will encourage small businesses to provide healthcare for employees through tax cuts. The incentives will, ideally, cover 50 percent of premiums.

Haley believes, while the program might not be perfect, it ensures quality care for all Americans.

"It comes out and demands that people are insured and that they will be insured by their employer or by collective organizations. Is it ideal? No," Haley said. "The problem with Romney's plan is that there's no guarantee that everyone will get the necessary medical support, medication and services."

However, Obamacare has been a constant target of Republicans. They argue privatizing insurance places the decision in the hands of the buyer, not the company.

"I have dog health insurance. My employer or the government doesn't pay for it. These are private companies that have to compete to get me to insure my dog against health problems," Ebelin said. "And to be honest, I often find that the efficiency, costs and services of the health insurance for my dog are better than the ones for us people."

Obama supporters criticize Romney's overall plan, saying its dependence on private industry could easily result in broken promises.

"If you're going to base your plan off private organizations and companies that you don't have any control over, you're going to find that they don't always do what you'd like," Haley said.

A full copy of Obama's economic plan is available [on his website](#).

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