

NEW MOVEMENTS SEEK SOLUTIONS FOR THE JOBLESS YOUNG



Joblessness among the youth remains at abysmally low levels leading to frustration and low morale amongst the young. Economists say that compared to the overall unemployment rate of 8.1 percent, for workers under 25 it more than doubled to 16.4 percent. Students with degrees in hand, but no employment are trying their best to repay student debts through odd jobs as baby sitters and waiters in hotels. However, what could come as heartening news to recent graduates is the National Association of Colleges and Employers reporting that employers will hire 10.2 percent more college graduates from the class of 2012, than they did from the class of the previous year. Heidi Shierholz, an economist who studies the labor market, said that the worst off were those who were not sufficiently qualified and had finished some college, but he said, "every way you cut it — by race or gender, with or without a college degree — young people are just not getting the job opportunities they need, and it will have a lasting impact on their careers." The sight of millions of idle youth is not very soothing to the eyes and the question is what can be done and can policies and programs be created to ensure that they get full-time jobs? All groups have their federations to help them, the teachers, the elderly, the gun owners amongst others but the jobless youth were lacking their own federation until now. Two movements, Campaign For Young America and Fix Young America, have come up to fight this generation rights and advocate the urgency behind initiating measures to remedy their job situation. Both of them have a non-partisan agenda of "more centralized leadership" and a single-minded mission of helping the young people find jobs. Aaron Smith, 30, co-founder of Young Invincibles, a nonprofit group based in Washington that is the force behind the Campaign for Young America said that "One thing we are really focused on is trying to better connect colleges and universities to local employers." The Campaign for Young America is conducting a 21-state bus tour, to spread awareness, garner information and based on the input received will propose policy recommendations. The group got together around 24 people, including Senator Ron Wyden, Oregon, Rep. Patrick McHenry, Republican of North Carolina and a host of other university leaders and entrepreneurs asking them to suggest solutions for solving youth unemployment. Scott Gerber, 28, founder of the Young Entrepreneur Council and Fix Young America said, "Anyone and their mother could come up with ideas, but what we wanted to do with Fix Young America was to get the strongest voices in the room, the ones who showed there was proof in the pudding." Of the many solutions that were floated, Mr. Smith advocated forgiveness of student loans. Another solution was floated by Zach Sims, whose chapter teaches young people JavaScript, the computer programming language, "There are a limited number of things you can do with an English degree," he said, "Coding skills are such a clear path to employment, regardless of your background." Senator Wyden suggested expansion of the Self-Employment Assistance Program, a not very well known government program that permits laid-off people to collect unemployment benefits while they start a business. This way it could help the youth financially as they await their jobs and help them concentrate on building their businesses instead of searching for contract work. However, Representative McHenry was in disagreement with the solutions proposed but supported the idea of getting people to propose ideas "It's young people with innovative ideas who are going to reform and restructure our economy," he said.