



Kamala Harris' one-job America

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California Sen. Kamala Harris made a strong showing at the first Democratic debates, hurting front-runner Joe Biden with her powerful criticism of the former vice president. We were just as struck, however, by her interesting views about work.

Harris criticized President Trump for boasting, as he often does, about how well the stock market has performed during his time in office. “That’s fine if you own stocks. So many families in America do not,” Harris said.

She also dismissed the nation’s low unemployment rate. “Well, yeah, people are working. They’re working two and three jobs,” she said.

But according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2.3 million workers had two or more part-time jobs in November 2016 when Trump was elected; today, the total is roughly 1.9 million. The number of people working one full-time job and one part-time job is relatively unchanged.

And, this isn’t much different than when Barack Obama was in the Oval Office. Steve Goldstein with MarketWatch notes that 5% of Americans had multiple jobs in May 2019, according to the BLS, and “it’s held to that range really since the U.S. escaped recession in 2009.”

But Harris believes the total should be zero.

“So when we talk about jobs,” she said, “let’s be really clear: In our America, no one should have to work more than one job to have a roof over their head and food on the table.”

No one. Apparently, Harris believes this should be the case whether a person has no children, or chooses to have a several children; or lives in a small house or a large house; or where that house is located. In her view, one job should do the trick.

This is nonsense, although none of the candidates on stage with Harris so much as blinked at her pronouncement. No surprise there, as the idea isn’t far removed from other proposals such as Bernie Sanders’ “Medicare for all” or Andrew Yang’s the government paying every adult \$,1000 per month, regardless of their work status.

For those who do work, Sen. Elizabeth Warren would ensure that no family pay more than 7 percent of its household income on child care — no matter how many children they have (provided they use a government-approved local providers).

The Cato Institute’s Ryan Bourne argues that supply-side reform is needed to reduce the costs of providing child care, but Warren’s demand-side plan “will further drive up the market price of child care ...” Heritage Foundation fellow Lindsey Burke makes the point that this plan isn’t

likely to improve education outcomes for youth and may not reflect families' preferences for their children's care.

“Creating another benefit for universal child care merely establishes a new federal subsidy for middle-class and upper income families,” Burke writes. “... This is the wrong way to help America's kids.”

But the goal is to win votes, and the candidates are pulling out all the stops, no matter how far-fetched, to do it.