

EXPANDED ANSWER 46:

COMMERCE

As we begin to envision our plans for the future, we need to remember that the constraints of the past are no longer automatically carried forward. We won't have the EPA, OSHA, IRS, DEA, TSA, HSA, FDA, FAA, FCC, FBI, CIA, HUD, ADA, SEC, DOT, USCG, or hundreds of other regulating organizations to control us. While they offer many excellent rules, regulations, and guidelines, it's up to us to select the very few appropriate parts and include them in our laws and operations. It is up to us to make our government function as a partner with us, as opposed to as an adversary.

It is elementary economics that to provide any sustainable growth, the amount of cash coming in must exceed the dollars flowing out. Our monetary outflows are numerous: food, gas, equipment, consumer goods, cars, building materials, utilities, taxes, services, etc. Our inflows are scarce: government transfer payments, immigration, and tourism. We must develop businesses that can reverse the dollar drain from the island.

Business creation opportunities for the island greatly exceed those applicable to us as individuals. We don't have the expertise to launch rockets, develop OTEC, staff new medical facilities, or even farm, but there is excellent potential for these from outside firms. In some cases, new businesses will train local workers and in others bring in experienced help. Either way, the island benefits and so do the citizens. New locally grown businesses are good for us and good for Vieques, but new and more complex businesses brought here by others can sometimes bring enormous benefits as well.

In order to attract any new business development, we must offer a competitive advantage over other locations. Proper zoning, reasonable taxes, excellent schools, proximity to transportation, limited regulation, stable government, rule of law, cost of living, quality of life, and other factors all weigh in decisions to relocate or begin a new business in a particular place.

The US suffers from an inability to prevent illegal immigration, yet it has an overly restrictive system of preventing guest workers with marketable and/or critical technical skills. Our policies should reflect the needs of our country and not politics. Our businesses should be able to reliably locate and hire suitable employees necessary to their success, at least on a temporary basis. Permanent residency and citizenship are different issues that need resolution.

See Expanded answer 52 for presentation of taxation plan.