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Letters | SPECIAL REPORT ON JOBS: RIGHT ON THE MONEY

I COMMEND YOU for the excellent special report on connecting young people with jobs as a means of preventing or lowering violence in the city. The point you make is so obvious, I'm tempted to take out an ad saying, "It's the jobs, stupid."

Having grown up in North Philadelphia, I am constantly asked what the difference is between that neighborhood today and what it was like 30 years ago. I always answer, "Jobs!"

Then, young people worked during the summers and after school. (I had a paper route, and delivered groceries on the weekend). And almost every adult male I came into contact with worked and supported his family.

The other difference is the level of violence. Then, people could sit on their front steps, and I and my sisters could walk the streets after dark. Today, only the very brave dare go out, sometimes even during the day, for fear of crime or violence.

Work lets individuals gain a sense of worth and self-esteem. Without it, people, especially the young, feel hopeless and unworthy. This leads to an attitude that fosters violence.

I hope all candidates for mayor read the report and take from it the message you laid out in your editorial. If they are really sincere about reducing violence, they need to learn that jobs, particularly for young people, are an essential ingredient in the solution.

Ernest E. Jones, President & CEO

Philadelphia Workforce Development Corp.