

To Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on California Economy Policy

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Governor Schwarzenegger:

Since I signed a "no-sue" agreement with Adobe Systems Incorporated when I was laid off one month after the September 11 incident, I have refrained from commenting on Adobe for more than two years. However, the following Adobe press release (February 4) concerns me deeply.

Adobe has announced that "it will host a CEO summit comprised of top Silicon Valley business leaders and the governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, at Adobe's San Jose headquarters Feb. 5, 2004." The summit will begin with a closed-door session between the governor and a select group of Silicon Valley executives and academic leaders, including Adobe President and CEO, Applied Materials CEO, HP President and CEO, Solectron President and CEO, Synopsys Chairman and CEO, and Stanford University President. Fifteen other Silicon Valley CEOs will also be in attendance. "The governor and Silicon Valley business leaders will focus on six issues central to the governor's economic recovery plan: the economic recovery bond, workers compensation, education, energy, housing and frivolous lawsuits."

Shame! The senseless Adobe bosses announced in 2000 their plan to hire one thousand employees (a 50% increase) and erect a third building at the headquarters (the North Tower), which just opened last month and remains empty. However, after the September 11 incident, rather than bearing the consequence of their own decisions, Adobe bosses immediately implemented company "restructuring" (layoffs), and now they are planning to completely shift its print technology (which established Adobe's indisputable leading status in the software industry) to India this year. No apologies. To rub salt in the wound, some managers took advantage of the "restructuring" to rid themselves of "unwanted" employees. I myself was insulted on my last day in Adobe by the manager who claimed I was being laid off "because you are not qualified for the position". In fact, I lost my job because I requested that the company set up some guidelines to regulate managers during a company meeting with the CEO.

Independent study shows that Silicon Valley's unemployment rate is between 30%-50%. It is obvious who caused Silicon Valley's economic crisis and who is bearing the bitter consequences. Instead of seeking state power to prevent "frivolous" lawsuits against its mismanagement, every Silicon Valley corporate must take employment as the top priority and educate its management to treat their employees as human beings. Employees are not tools to be used and thrown away. We are Silicon Valley's citizens and we created Silicon Valley's wealth.

Here I am not blaming Adobe's business management (in fact, I admit that Adobe is perhaps the best among Silicon Valley's hi-tech firms). Nor I am saying CEOs should be excluded from California's economic policy making. However, as Adam Smith taught us, corporate should not directly dominate politics, especially economic policy in a time of crisis.

Today you "specifically requested a closed-door meeting with less than two dozen CEOs to focus on solutions," rather than listening to wide representation from all people in Silicon Valley. Tomorrow, how can you expect the people of Silicon Valley will listen to you?

Respectfully,

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