

OPINION

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Congress Should Cut Corporate Welfare

Health and education services are wrong target

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

In the recent proposed federal budget, President Bush recommended that Congress eliminate or reduce 150 government programs. Congress must now decide between cutting social programs that benefit the poor and middle class or to eliminate and reduce programs that aide the corporate class. For

decades we have seen Republican administrations cut social programs and welfare for the poor while corporate America continues to receive billions in corporate welfare by way of federal grants.

The Bush budget proposes drastic cuts in education and healthcare programs. In fact, nearly half of all the proposed cuts are in areas that provide education and healthcare assistance to the poor and middle class: All from a president who campaigned to improve education and healthcare for American citizens.

Every year, billions of tax dollars are given to major corporations to advance research and technology for their companies. The federal grant monies are not returned to the

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government. Instead, the corporations use the money to increase their profits.

One federal grant-funding agency called the Advanced Technology Program has cost taxpayers more than \$2 billion in the last 15 years. Even some right wing conservative republican groups are complaining!

Brian Riedl, a federal budget analyst at the Conservative Heri-

tage Foundation, studied this program and concluded that with the returns on investments the companies receive, they could have financed their own research without government grants. Indeed he reports that over 40 percent of the grant money has gone to Fortune 500 companies, such as IBM, General Electric and General Motors.

Congress should place the needs of taxpayers ahead of the corporate

giants who can pay their own way. The most vulnerable in our society are going to suffer in areas that address our most basic human needs — healthcare and education, if the budget cuts are approved.

Meanwhile, the corporate hand-outs will continue to go unnoticed as our society scoffs at poor people living on government assistance. Something is certainly wrong with the values of a government that will cut programs for the poor while giving billions to rich corporations.

In today's society, where "values" appear to be the flavor of the day, it is becoming more and more clear that the current administration places the values of corporate greed over human needs.



Judge Greg Mathis

Judge Mathis is chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Our Painful Progress for Diversity

Accepting, hope-filled adults start as children



BY MYRLIE EVERS-WILLIAMS

I am humbled by the reality of the world in which I live, a world that does not embrace diversity on the level that it should.

Recent news that Edgar Ray Killen, the white supremacist indicted for the 1964 murders of civil rights workers, Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman in Philadelphia, Miss., was released on bond to await his trial in freedom, may not have resonated with many.

But to see someone accused of the most heinous of crimes walk away on a mere pittance of \$250,000, was a flashback to the most unspeakable nightmare of my life, the day when my children and I watched my husband die before our very eyes.

We live in a world of contradictions. Fortunately not all of them are discon-

certing.

Not 60 miles from the site of the murders, stands the Boys and Girls Clubs of East Mississippi, a place where youth come together to celebrate their individuality, pursue their dreams and encourage diversity. A few more miles down the road is the Boys and Girls Clubs of Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, a place that not only shares in the differences between black and white, but between black, white, red and brown.

Both clubs are beneficiaries of The Allstate Foundation's "Youth for Unity" initiative, a national effort to promote tolerance to millions of America's impressionable youth. Through programs like "Youth for Unity," and organizations such as the Medgar Evers Institute in Jackson, Miss., we are working to break down the very contradictions that remain a hindrance to our growth as a nation, through the eyes of the newest generation of Americans.

Research shows that children who are exposed to diversity and tolerance at a young age, at places like Boys and Girls

Clubs, grow up to be more accepting and hope-filled adults, creating the leaders of tomorrow, and ultimately bettering our mutual quality of life.

We don't know if Edgar Ray Killen will be convicted when he again stands trial for murdering those three innocent young men more than 40 years ago, but justice may be served if his trial provokes a national discussion about race. Because the only reason to relive such a tragedy is to learn from it, so that it never happens again.

Changing perceptions and contradictions must begin with our youth. If this can be done in Mississippi, it can be done anywhere. And it is being done. Let injustice linger in the old, but let us infuse our youth with hope and righteousness each and every day.

Myrlie Evers-Williams is the widow of civil rights activist Medgar Evers, and Chairman Emeritus of the NAACP. Today she serves as founder of the Medgar Evers Institute and is a member of Boys and Girls Clubs of America's National Diversity Advisory Council.



BY U.S. REP. MELVIN L. WATT

Budget Proposal Extremely Disappointing

Blueprint offers no solutions to end disparities

On first review of President Bush's budget proposal, I find it extremely disappointing. Mr. Bush's proposal recommends severe cuts in education, food and nutrition programs, and literacy initiatives for youth and young adults.

The proposed budget neglects suggestions offered by the Congressional Black Caucus for ending disparities that exist between African Americans and white Americans in every aspect of life.

The CBC gave the President three distinct opportunities to respond favorably to our Agenda: (1) during a meeting with the president on Jan. 26 when the CBC delivered our agenda which outlined these disparities and offered ways to eliminate the gap; (2) during the State

of the Union address; and (3) in his budget proposal.

Unfortunately, the president missed all three opportunities. This budget appears to offer no real solutions for change and falls short of what the CBC hoped would be included in the document.

In summary, members of the CBC are extremely disappointed with the President's budget proposal and will work with our colleagues on the Hill for a budget that reflects the values and concerns of all Americans: education, health care, economic opportunity, justice for all, retirement security and foreign policy.

U.S. Rep. Melvin L. Watt, D-N.C., is chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.




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