

# OPINION

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## Keep Kids from Gangs

Budget falls short of promise

BY U.S. REP. DIANE WATSON

In his State of the Union Address, President Bush touched on the growing threat of youth and gang violence and made reference to new initiatives to keep young people out of gangs. Unfortunately, the President's rhetoric is out of sync with his actions. Let's look at the facts.

This month the President submitted his new federal budget to Congress. Surprisingly, the President's budget calls for the elimination of many important youth violence and gang prevention programs.

Among the casualties are funding for Byrne Grants to help state and local law enforcement control violent and drug-related crime; community policing programs to hire additional officers;



U.S. Rep. Diane Watson

*How are we to meaningfully address the growing threat of youth and gang violence when the President's budget eviscerates most of the government's gang prevention programs?*

Juvenile Accountability Block Grants to help states and localities improve their juvenile justice systems; and programs designed to reintegrate youthful offenders.

Every one of these important programs has been zeroed out of the federal budget to the tune of almost \$1 billion dollars.

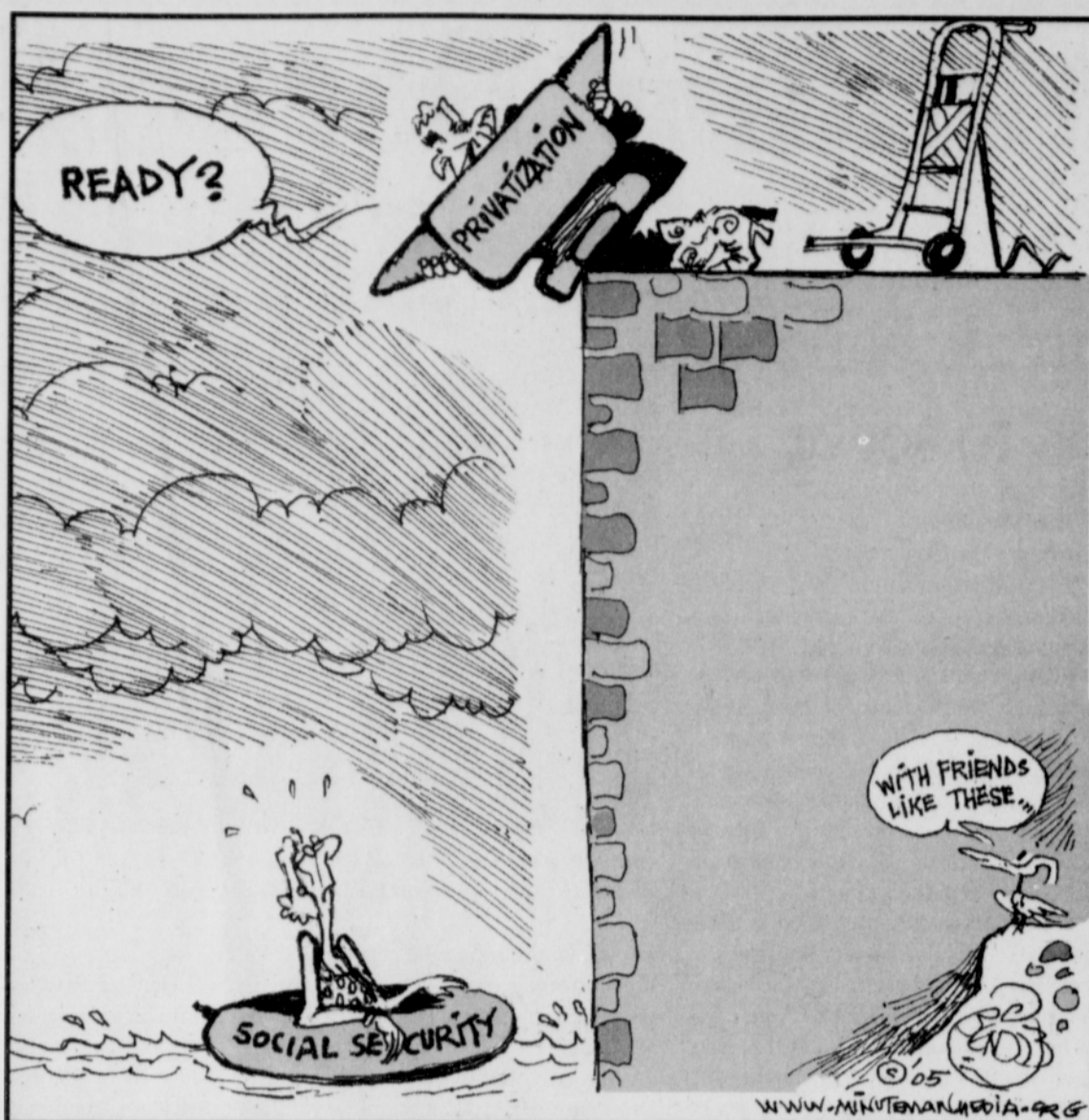
In my mind, President Bush is practicing fuzzy logic. How are we to meaningfully address the growing threat of youth and gang violence when the President's budget eviscerates most of the government's gang prevention

programs? In its most disturbing manifestation, the reach of gangs has not just become national but international in scope.

We all must be on guard and concerned by these disturbing trends.

Youth violence solves nothing, but the President's budget will do nothing to solve youth violence.

U.S. Rep. Diane Watson, D-Calif. serves Los Angeles and Culver City, Calif. She is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.



## Tax Cuts for Rich Should Be Repealed

Balancing the budget on the backs of the poor

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The \$600 billion tax-cuts enacted a couple of years ago resulted in drastic reductions in social programs that benefit the poor and working class and has failed to jump start the economy as promised. Furthermore, with the budget cuts proposed last month to 150

federal programs, many more people will have to endure the hardships of poverty for years to come.

A six-month study conducted by the Detroit News revealed some eye opening realities. The tax cuts intended by President Bush will inevitably cause more cuts in federal programs. Today, nearly \$36 million or 13 percent of Americans live in poverty, not including the tens



Judge Greg Mathis

of millions who are considered the

working poor. Federal programs, such as social services, job training and housing are under funded because of the tax cuts of Bush's first term. Tax breaks that benefited the wealthiest 10 percent actually cost the impoverished and working poor more money. Americans who were poor lost more in services than they saved in taxes. One example is the federally subsidized childcare program.

During the Clinton administration, funding for this program increased by 49 percent and moved more than 2.5 million people into the workforce. Contrarily, under the Bush administration there has been only a 5 percent increase in childcare funding, barely enough to keep up with inflation.

While the wealthy will benefit from tax breaks totaling \$148 billion this year alone, government will spend only half of that amount on childcare programs, job training, public housing, meals for the needy, welfare, and college Pell-grants.

Congress should repeal the tax cuts so that additional programs won't have to be cut from the federal budget. We should not try to balance the budget on the backs of the poor, while the wealthy continue to enjoy huge tax-cuts.

Congress must be willing to advocate not for 10 percent of Americans, but for the majority who will benefit from appropriate funding that will restore the economy of America.

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



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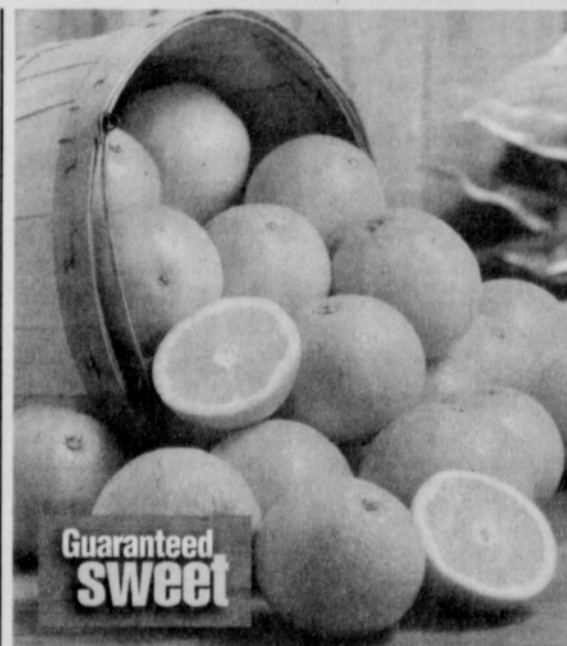
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