OPINION

Taxes on the Rich and Everyone Else

Fairness lost with loopholes

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Even though Republican Presidential candidate Mitt Romney is hesitant to release his tax returns, he is on record saying that he

is probably at a 15-percent tax equality. rate.

workers. By comparison, Presi- joblosses moving more and more

dent Obama had a 26-percent people from the middle class into retary pays a higher tax rate tax rate in 2010; the income that was taxed included his book royalties, which undoubtedly totaled

more than one million hostile - tone. dollars.

Romney's wealth and his comparably low tax rate highlight a very important issue: income in-

In the U.S., income inequal-This means that Romney, who ity, that is the gap between the has a net worth of over \$200 rich and everyone else, has million, has a lower tax rate than grown steadily for decades. With most middle-class American the recession and subsequent richest men in the world, shock-

poverty, the discussions over wealth and taxes have taken on an entirely different-sometimes-

that CEOs of major companies can earn tens of millions of dol- investments. lars each year, while their emgenerate the profit that would much less and probably pay a wealthy Americans. Romney is higher tax rate.

ingly revealed that his own sec- that many think is unfair.

than he does. Like most of us, Buffet doesn't see how this could possibly be fair.

Romney is so rich that he It is unconscionable to think doesn't actually work. Instead, he lives off the interest off his

These investments are taxed ployees, who work long hours to at a much lower rate than the standard 35-percent that is nornet such a large salary, earn mally levied onto the salaries of using a special provision to en-Warren Buffet, one of the sure less of his money goes into government coffers; a practice

Changes have to be made in our nation's tax code so that everyone is paying taxes comparable to their income.

No one is asking for a socialist system where everyone makes the same. However, it is only fair that the tax burden on lower and middle-income workers is eased a bit and loopholes for the super-rich be eliminated.

Judge Greg Mathis is a longtime advocate for equal justice. His life story of a street youth who rose from jail to judge has provided hope to millions.

Red Tails Movie Shoots Down Stereotypes

The power to overcome any barrier

BY MARC H. MORIAL

I attended the New York premiere of a new George Lucas film about the heroic exploits of the all-black



fighter pilot squadron that helped America defeat the Nazi's in World War II. I am not in the business of promoting new movies, but there are several reasons that compel me to highlight the release of "Red Tails," the story of the pioneering Tuskegee cans. Airmen.

First, the movie has a virtually all-black cast with black male heroes, a rare depiction by Hollywood. Cuba Gooding Jr., Terrence Howard, Nate Parker, David Oyelowo, and NE-YO all litical points. play key roles.

Lucas has said that the black theme and black cast were major reasons Hollywood repeatedly declined to back the film. He struggled 23-years to get major studio financing.

"I showed it to all of them," he said, "and they said no, we don't know how to market a movie like this." He wound up pouring \$58 million of his own money

into the project.

denigrating the African Ameri-

lowed a few days later by a United States military. They The second reason I am ex- comment from Newt Gingrich were trained at Tuskegee Incited about this film is that recent that "African Americans should stitute, now Tuskegee Univercomments by political candidates demand pay checks not food sity in Alabama. Despite disstamps." Gingrich has called crimination during World War can community and reviving out-. Barack Obama "The best food II, these brilliant airmen fought

to fight racism back home.

Lucas teamed with black coexecutive producer, Charles Floyd Johnson, and black director Anthony Hemingway to create a film they all hope will inspire a new generation of African-American youth.

The message of the movie, and the lesson of the Tuskegee Airmen, is clear: We have the power to overcome any barrier to serve our nation and achieve our dreams.

One movie won't solve the problem, but we think it's an important step in the right direction.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

We hope what youngsters get out of the story is that under some dire circumstances we prevailed. We performed successfully and we opened doors that they don't have to fight to.

-- Col. Charles McGee, "Red Tails" technical consultant and surviving member of the Tuskegee Airmen.

important than ever to spotlight tory." the historic contributions and public service of black Ameri-

In just the last few weeks, statements. two presidential candidates, Rick have perpetuated false and destructive racial stereotypes in desperate attempts to score po-

In a discussion of social assistance programs, Santorum said he doesn't want to "make black people's lives better by giving them someone else's money." Santorum's appalling comment ing lives. implied that people of color are a drain on resources mainly provided by whites, even though about 70 percent of food stamp recipients are white.

Santorum's statement was fol-

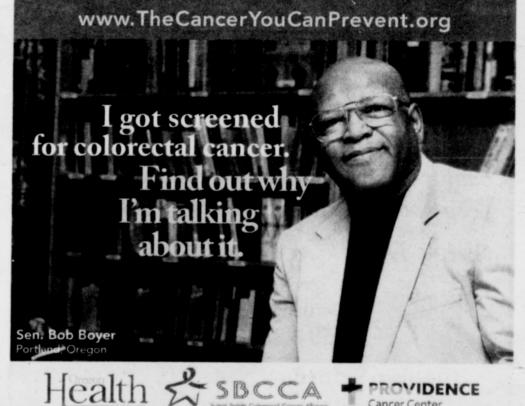
dated stereotypes, make it more stamp president in American his- fascism abroad and returned

We are outraged by the comments of both candidates and denounced them in separate

The fact is, social safety net Santorum and Newt Gingrich, programs serve families in dire circumstances from all walks of life. Many of those who now find themselves in need, whatever their ethnic background, are the very people who have paid into these programs and made sacrifices to support their families and our nation throughout their work-

> Which brings me back to the Tuskegee Airmen.

> In the 1940s, before our armed forces were integrated, the Tuskegee Airmen became the first black aviators in the



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