

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### Veterans are being used to cut benefits for others

Veterans are being treated dishonorably by the people who should be making sure that their needs are being met. The federal budget is cutting so much out of veterans services that veterans offices on the local level can't provide adequate service. On top of that, veterans' medical costs will increase.

You don't believe it?

President Bush's budget would more than double the co-payment charged to many veterans for prescription drugs and would require some to pay a new fee of \$250 a year for the privilege of using government health care.

A September 2004 report by the Government Accountability Office found that officials at six of seven Veterans Affairs medical facilities surveyed said they "may not be able to meet" increased demand for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Veterans are crying foul over President Bush's budget proposals to cut spending on their health care.

Mr. Bush knows this is no time to cut veterans' benefits. By proposing changes that are politically unacceptable, he's using veterans as a bargaining chip: If Congress refuses to make the veterans' cuts the president has proposed, they will be pressured to make even deeper cuts in programs for people who don't have the veterans' ability to fight back.

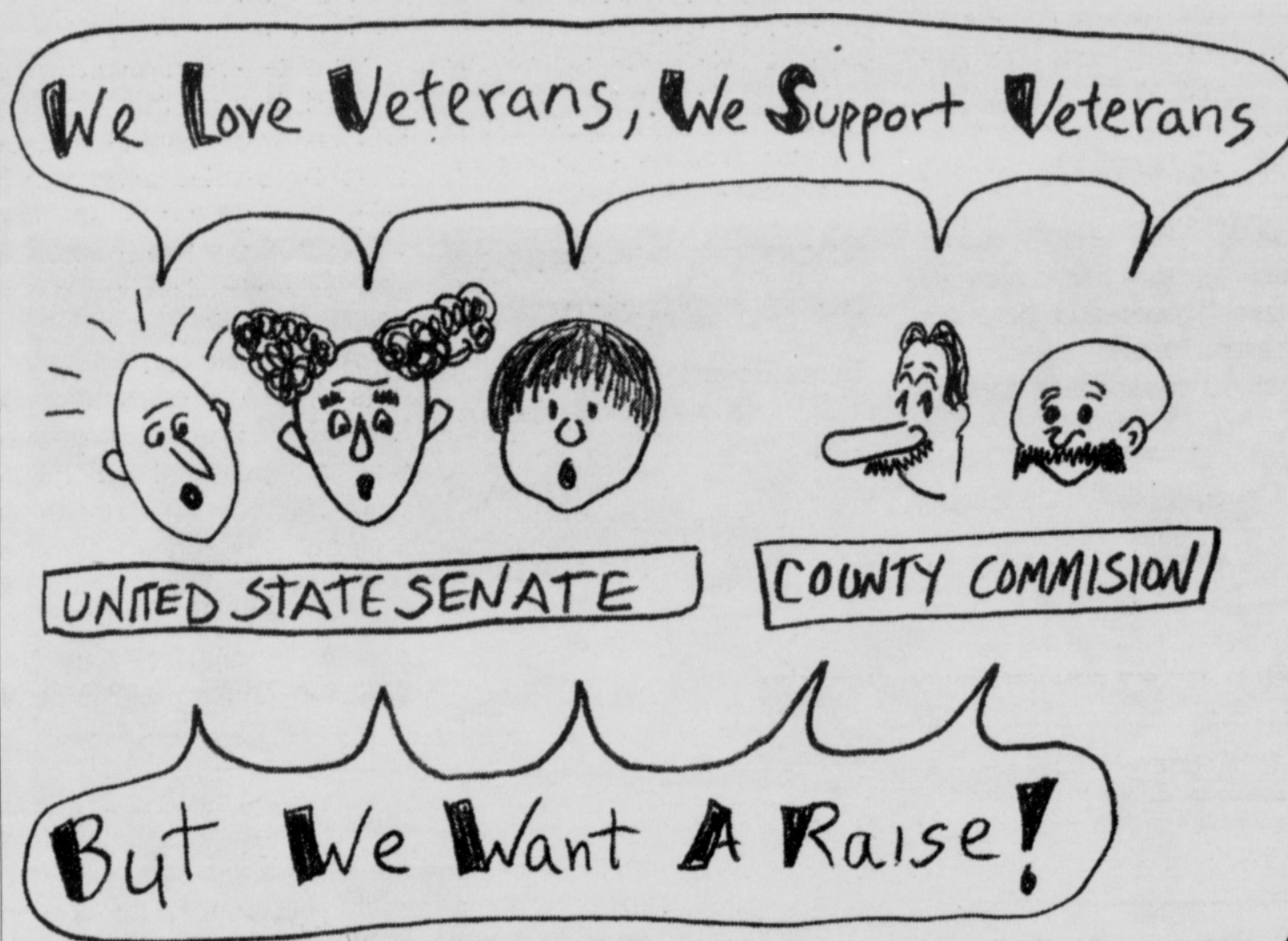
In other words, the president is pitting veterans against the 660,000 women, infants and children whose food assistance is on the chopping block; against the 120,000 preschoolers who will be cut from Head Start; against the 370,000 families and disabled and elderly individuals who will lose rental assistance; against communities that will lose support for clean air and drinking water; and so on.

The size of the proposed spending cuts are a direct result of the president's refusal to ask for tax-cut roll-backs - that is, to ask wealthy investors, who have had lavish, deficit-bloating tax cuts over the past four years, to contribute toward deficit reduction.

In fact, his budget proposes even more tax breaks, specifically for people with six-figure incomes or more and overflowing investment portfolios.

These trade-offs are unacceptable - for veterans and for America.

THE OL' DRAFT DODGERS CLUB  
CUTTING BENEFITS FOR THOSE  
WHO DID SERVE ...



## Letters

### Student defends work of school district

To the Editor:

In the June 2nd edition of The Independent, I read in the Opinion section about how the editor thinks opportunities to educate are overlooked. The editor stated that the School Administration failed to plan ahead in setting the SKID presentation to the high school on Senior Skip Day. The editor also wrote that nearly everybody, except the school board, knew well in advance.

As a high school junior, I would like to say that nobody knew about Senior Skip Day until three days before. It's a question of planning. Which takes longer, planning a melodrama that includes a life-flight, paramedics, police officers, and students, or some seniors saying, "We should have Senior Skip Day on Friday." The school administration doesn't even sponsor Senior Skip Day. Saying that the school should've rescheduled something that probably took weeks to organize, just because some

seniors were gone is like the school canceling a class for the day because some kids are sick. You still do it. The article also mentioned how the primary target audience wasn't there. But if I remember right, there were over 200 high school students, and eighth graders who watched. Weren't we all the target audience?

Later in the article, it also talked about "misplaced priorities," and how "replacing an experienced music teacher with a rookie whose salary was lower also caused students to lose out on valuable educational experiences such as Music in May, and Honor Band." Well, I'm here to say as a proud band member for the past seven years, we did not lose out on any of these things. First of all, Mr. Isted, whom I really liked and respected, resigned. The school district replaced him with the most qualified applicant for the vacant position, Mr. Shannon. Over the past two years even though numbers in band have been low, I have enjoyed having Mr. Shannon as our band teacher. Over the past

two years, we have sent people to honor band. This year we sent seven, and if not for conflicts, another four would have gone, including myself. The honor band itself was a prestigious event, with the top band conductors in the northwest teaching the students a lot. Mr. Shannon told us about every honor band, and about Music In May, but it was the students, not him, who were not interested in going. This was his last year as a teacher in Vernonia, and I am sad to see him go. I would personally like to thank him for the past two years of band.

The last thing I would like to comment on is the last section of the article, in which it talks about other "educational ways to engage curious young minds." The editor asks why kids aren't intrigued by extracurricular activities that include geography, sciences, drama, or the Constitution. Well, my mother, the music and drama teacher at Washington Grade School has put on plays involving an average of 40 Ju-

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