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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Texas-sized mistake?

COMMENTS FROM READERS

Thursday, July 23, 2009

Not right choice for Texas Tech

Chancellor Kent Hance did not hire Alberto Gonzales because of his concerns over "freedom of speech." Hance hired the ex-attorney general because Republicans always put their party and/or their party members first. He has risked the reputation of Texas Tech University and he missed an opportunity to provide the students with someone that might appeal to their higher selves. Instead the students will be influenced by someone of questionable integrity and judgement. The Republicans continue to walk through the desert with no moral compass.

Kathleen Forrest

Austin

McNamara admitted war's failures

The obituary and editorial about the late Robert McNamara pointedly stated that the secretary admitted the Vietnam War was a mistake. But I am moved by the courage of his admission. McNamara was blamed for the downward spiral of involvement there, but telling (President Lyndon) Johnson landed him on the curb. However, he did publicly state his belief that the war was unwinnable — even if it came many years after the fact.

Many Americans feel anger towards this man. We forget our own doctrine of Imperialism, combined with a fear of Communism, lies at the root of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. In Vietnam our image of America was twisted into something we disliked and barely recognized. It seems McNamara had the same reckoning and said that publicly.

McNamara was no fool. If he had the courage to expose his greatest flaws, don't we owe him the decency of our compassion?

Michele Bondy

Austin

Proud to attend a tea party

I don't know how the tea parties' critics voted in the last election, but most of us did not vote to change the Republic but rather to change Washington.

We just wanted the lies, corruption, and constant fighting to stop. Instead over the last few months we see things have only gotten worse.

This is no longer about Republicans or Democrats, Bush or Obama, but about restoring out-of-control spending. I don't mind paying my "fair" share of taxes, but I would like my elected officials to use some common sense. Is that shameful and misguided?

I go to the tea parties because it is my duty to my country and to those that have gone before us who have sacrificed much. I go because this Republic is in jeopardy. Why? Because for decades we have put our trust in so-called political experts in Washington, business experts on Wall Street and self-appointed experts of education and society. Let's do some honest listening and recognize the difference between anger and truth.

Lynn Kennedy

Salado

One-sided politics from editors

The editors of the Austin American-Statesman should be ashamed of themselves. Today they demonstrated exactly how left wing they are and how much they are in the bag for Obama. The editorial about Sonia Sotomayor talks of "nuances" and "slick well-financed efforts" and even includes — gasp, choke — bigotry. It seems that if a liberal Democrat is criticized a mortal sin has been committed but if a conservative or Republican is vilified, they are fair game. Talk about hypocrisy.

Reading on, all of the letters about the tea parties are critical and, in many cases, vicious. One even thinks that one of the main tenants of socialism and communism "from each according to his abilities and to each according to his needs" is a admirable philosophy. Again, I'm sure that these same people would be cheering on left-wing protesters marching in the streets and destroying property.

I am put in mind of a quote I read recently. "The rude virtues of yesterday — courage, self-reliance, individual morality — could be arguably considered a more advanced cultural model than today's collective gestalt."

Stephen Curyk

Lago Vista

Case against death penalty

Once again, the "news" inflames: isn't the story (Re: Austin officer's killer files new claim) that the discrepancies in this case — like most— are so numerous and egregious that we should conclude that the death penalty is wrong — in this case and in all cases — and that we should, as have other nations and states, cease this costly, flawed and painful penalty? Enough already!

Galia Harrington

Pflugerville

Institutions not right for people

A basic understanding of civil rights leads to the conclusion that state schools warehousing people with developmental disabilities have outlasted their questionable utility; they are a shameful relic of failed public policy and outdated attitudes toward people with disabilities. Even with newly signed legislation to improve conditions, the conditions of the institutions will remain deplorable and also will continue to be the most glaring example of badly spent money.

Institutions warehousing people with disabilities across the country are the focus of failed inspections, horrendous findings letters that detail substandard care, class action lawsuits and de-certifications.

There are many other existing and proposed initiatives that support de-institutionalization — Americans with Disabilities Act, New Freedom Initiatives, Olmstead Plans, Lifespan Respite Care Act, Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act, Pathways to Independence Act, Family and Workplace Balancing Act— to name a few.

The institutional bias is not reflective of American attitudes; people want to stay in their homes and communities, regardless of disability, at any age.

Robert Stack

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