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# The Post-Standard

## Post-Standard Letter

Thursday, January 29, 2009

### **Don't balance budget by cutting abuse prevention**

To the Editor:

Each year in New York state, there are over 70,000 confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect. Many cases also go unreported, and researchers estimate the real toll could be three times that number.

Two voluntary programs - Healthy Families New York and Nurse-Family Partnership - have made significant progress in preventing child abuse and neglect by allowing trained professionals to visit the homes of new parents and teach them about young children's health and nutrition needs.

Home visits are highly effective, both in preventing child abuse and cutting later crime. A study of the Nurse-Family Partnership found it cut incidents of child abuse nearly in half, and reduced the number of arrests among children and mothers who participated by 59 percent.

Despite the clear benefits of these programs, the Nurse-Family Partnership and Healthy Families combined currently serve less than 10 percent of families who desperately need their services, including 60 families here in Syracuse who are enrolled in the new Nurse-Family Partnership program.

The governor's budget proposes deep cuts to New York's home-visiting programs. In addition to the immediate dangers and harm abuse causes children, it also breeds future generations of criminals. That is why nearly 300 sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys and crime survivors from across the state join me, through Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York, in opposing cuts to these visitation programs.

Children are our most precious resource. Cutting programs and services to protect and nurture them ignores the long-term benefits of these programs. Let's not balance our state's budget by putting future generations of children at risk.

William J. Fitzpatrick

Onondaga County district attorney

Syracuse

## **Hopes president builds culture of life, respect**

To the Editor:

Dear President Barack Obama:

In your inaugural address, you set forth this challenge: "The time has come to reaffirm and carry forward the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

Two days after you spoke those noble words, an estimated 300,000 citizens came to Washington for the 36th annual March for Life, on the anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion.

We came to ask our government, and especially you, to grant every child the same opportunity you had as a baby in your mother's womb to realize your God-given potential.

We marched because we believe killing a baby before birth is wrong, just as infanticide is wrong; because we believe all Americans, born and pre-born, deserve what is promised by the words engraved above the columns of the Supreme Court: "equal justice under the law."

We believe women deserve better than abortion. At the pre-March rally, more than a dozen courageous women stood silently on the speaker's platform holding signs that said, "I regret my abortion."

Mr. President, we pray that you will work to build a culture of life that respects the dignity and worth of every human being at every stage of development.

Judy and Tom Lickona

Cortland

## **U.S.-made products would sell if available**

To the Editor:

The warning that everything now is imported from China while our own manufacturing base disappears didn't really register with me - until I went shopping recently for a gift for my niece's baby shower.

After walking the entire length of a local children's store, I couldn't find one piece of clothing that wasn't made overseas - China, Vietnam or Thailand.

I went to the mall and visited four more chain stores. Not one had children's clothes made in the USA. I realized then how threatened this country's economic future is.

When you shop at Wal-Mart, you expect to find cheap items made overseas. But to not be able to find any stores that carry American-made products is disheartening and frustrating.

How can we sit back and watch our country collapse this way? We are mortgaging our children's futures!

Don't blame this on the consumer. Many of us would buy American if it were available.

I've stopped buying dinnerware made in China because of the lead paint, but we still have their toys on our shelves. Where are the American toy manufacturers?

We need to stop making it more profitable for companies to locate overseas. The first thing to go should be tax breaks for companies that do.

Marlene Slade

Baldwinsville

### **'Obesity tax' unfair to low-income families**

To the Editor:

I am one of those "overweight" people Gov. Paterson talks about - not because I pig out on junk food, but because I can't afford to buy fresh fruits and fresh vegetables.

I'm sure Gov. Paterson is able to eat fresh fruits and fresh vegetables prepared by his cook. He does not have to worry about the price of things.

Why are unhealthy foods so much cheaper than healthy foods? It seems the state promotes consumption of unhealthy foods by making them more accessible to low-income families.

Why not lower the price of healthy foods like wheat breads, fruits and vegetables? The only foods low-income families can afford are pre-packaged, high in carbohydrates and fat.

My entire family, including my 17-year-old brother, would rather eat broccoli and grapes than greasy burgers and french fries. But that's all we can afford. We get fresh fruits and vegetables when they are on sale - a rare blessing.

Gov. Paterson does not have to worry about raising his family on less than \$10,000 a year. My mother does a good job of it with a family of five. Who is Gov. Paterson to tell parents how to raise their children?

Calling the tax on non-diet sodas the "obesity tax" is personally offensive. That's pretty close to discrimination.

Terra Gravelle

Pulaski

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