

LETTERS

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Health scare

"The Cowardly Bully" (Editorial, Feb. 23) is a rash distortion of the health-care debate.

When money is taken from our already fragile health-care system, it hurts not only patients and workers but also local communities. The imminent closure of two Queens hospitals will cost the community 4,000 full-time jobs and leave the borough nearly 500 hospital beds short of the minimum needed.

Further cuts are a scary proposition, and our campaign is intended to educate New Yorkers on the real, human, impact these cuts would have if they are enacted. The answer to this serious threat isn't a publicity stunt; it is a serious discussion about rolling back these dangerous cuts. Unfortunately, neither state Health Commissioner Richard Daines nor The Post is ready to have that discussion.

George Gresham

President, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers, East Manhattan

Tax the rich

My colleague Kathryn Wyldie is correct to say that New York is in the midst of a serious fiscal crisis and should look into long-term cost-saving reforms wherever possible ("Worse Than 9/11," PostOpinion, Feb. 24).

However, the idea that "interest groups" are urging tax hikes on the wealthy to solve the state's budget problems is misleading.

A majority of the groups calling for progressive tax reform are nonprofit, communitybased organizations that depend on government funding to provide essential services to low-income New Yorkers, services made even more critical in an economic recession. Employees of these organizations do not have large salaries or pensions, and the agencies themselves often receive such limited government contracts that they have to raise private money just to make payroll and keep programs running.

Nancy Wackstein

Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses of New York, Manhattan

Top shelf

"Fat in the Libraries" (Editorial, Feb. 24) misses the mark.

The vast majority of library retirees receive, on average, pensions of between \$19,000 and \$24,000. To single out these two individuals as representative of all retirees is misleading.

With just over half of our total budget supported by public funding, we rely heavily on the generosity of private donors. In this economic downturn, more New Yorkers are turning to their libraries for help. Dismissing the importance of libraries is a disservice to the millions who rely on our free services and look to us as an anchor in their communities.

Paul LeClerc

President, The New York Public Library, Manhattan

Fighting hunger

The provision in President Obama's stimulus package extending food stamp benefits for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) is designed to address hunger during a time of high unemployment ("Sticking With Welfare That Works," Editorial, Feb. 20). ABAWDs who are currently receiving food-stamp benefits are already required to search for work; the bill only extends the amount of time for ABAWDs to find a job. Food stamps, an essential part of the stimulus, were found to provide the most bang for the government buck in stimulating the economy, according to a recent analysis. Jobs available to ABAWDs in the Work Experience Program that Mayor Bloomberg champions are unpaid and will not help lift an individual out of poverty.

Betsy Gotbaum

Public Advocate, Manhattan

Joel Berg

Executive Director, NYC Coalition Against Hunger

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Abstract (Document Summary)

The provision in President Obama's stimulus package extending food stamp benefits for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) is designed to address hunger during a time of high unemployment ("Sticking With Welfare That Works," Editorial, Feb. 20). ABAWDs who are currently receiving food-stamp benefits are already required to search for work; the bill only extends the amount of time for ABAWDs to find a job. Food stamps, an essential part of the stimulus, were found to provide the most bang for the government buck in stimulating the economy, according to a recent analysis. Jobs available to ABAWDs in the Work Experience Program that Mayor Bloomberg champions are unpaid and will not help lift an individual out of poverty.

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