

LETTERS

Prevention pays

Lawmakers from Washington's 9th Legislative District and throughout the state return to Olympia this month to wrestle with what promises to be the most dire budget situation we've ever seen. They will make difficult decisions about what to cut and what to keep.

I hope that high-quality preschool for low-income children is among the programs that the Legislature chooses to keep.

Why does a sheriff care about quality preschool? My experience in law enforcement confirms what research has shown: High-quality early learning is an effective strategy to increase graduation rates and reduce crime.

Long-term studies of high-quality preschools have found that at-risk kids who do not attend those programs tend to drop out of high school and abuse illegal drugs. They are 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18 and five times more likely to be repeat offenders by age 27.

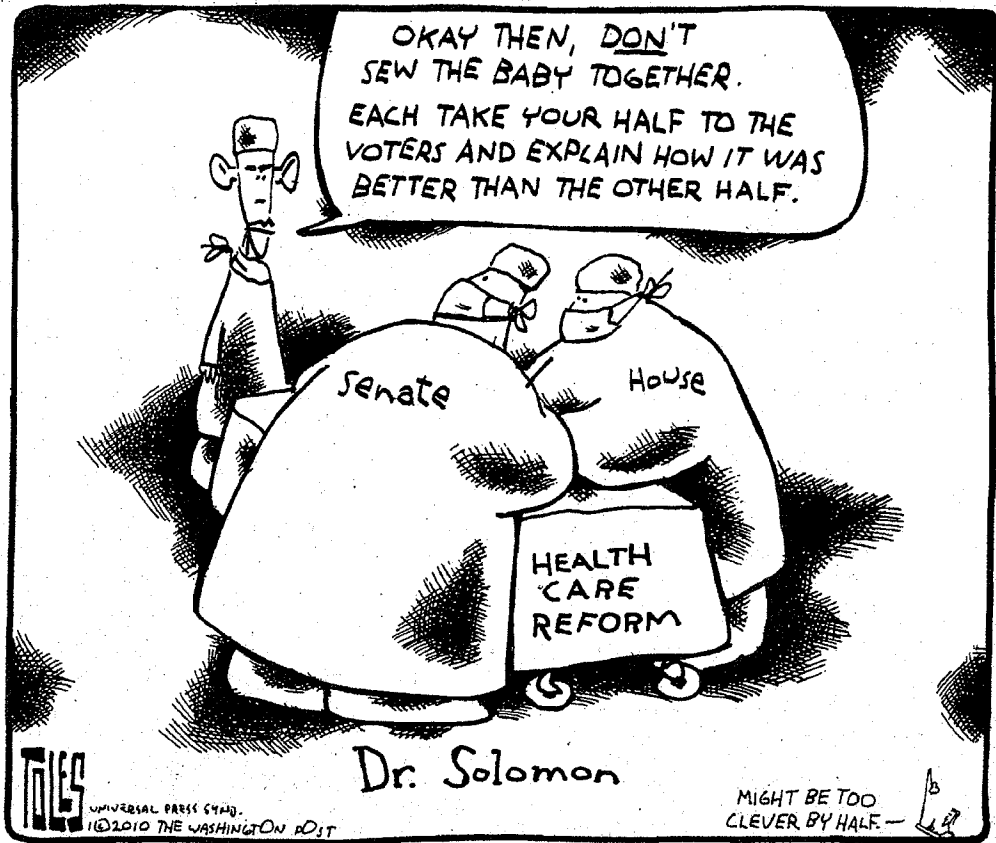
Conversely, at-risk children who participate in preschool programs are significantly less likely to end up in the criminal justice system. ...

Crime is costly, while preventing crime saves money. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy estimates that quality preschool for low-income 3- and 4-year-olds yields a net savings of more than \$12,000 per child in crime-related costs.

In Asotin County, one year of the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program costs \$6,300, which is approximately 29 percent of the cost of one year in the county jail. ...

I urge the Legislature to maintain our state's investment in ECEAP. We must

Tom Toles / The Washington Post



make certain that more children are on track to graduation day, not a sentencing day in court.

KEN BANCROFT
Asotin County sheriff
Asotin

Argument misinformed

Wendell Stark appears to be misinformed (Jan. 2) in a number of his arguments regarding gray wolves.

Ask any wildlife biologist and they will tell you that the Canadian wolves released into Idaho are indeed the same as those that were here prior to their eradication.

Deer and elk are not victims. They are a food source for hunting animals — bears, cougars, coyotes, wolves and humans. It is a symbiotic relationship that

has existed in the natural world for thousands of years. Does he feel sorry for the chicken he has for dinner?

SUSAN WESTERVELT
Deary

Bring back Alcatraz

We worry about where or what we should do with the terrorists (bad word) that are held in Guantanamo Bay. I believe we have a perfect place available. They can pray five times a day to Allah, on their knees, and bounce their heads off the floor.

Give them C-rations, a blanket or two, a little water, (they probably don't bathe or shower anyway), and a few clothes or whatever they use.

No guards needed. Leave

it the way the Indians left it. Let them swim for their freedom if they like. They call it Alcatraz.

DICK FIKE
Lewiston

Acted heartlessly

To whomever abandoned young cats at the dumpster on Harpster Grade, it is not only illegal but contemptible and heartless. While you are cozy in your home in the middle of the night, those poor cats are in the deep snow in a little cardboard box without food or warmth. There is no shelter near by, nothing! God will judge you for your cruelty!

BEVERLY FROST
Harpster