



Comment on the Commentary of the Day

by

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Disclaimer: The following "Letters to the Editor" were sent to the respective publications on the dates indicated. Some were printed but many were not. The original articles that are being commented on may or may not be available on the internet and may require registration or subscription to access if they are. Some of the original articles are syndicated and therefore may have appeared in other publications also.

18 March 2006

The Editor, New York Times
229 West 43rd St.
New York, NY 10036

Dear Editor:

Elizabeth Rose wants to outlaw lobbying ("Make Lobbying Illegal," March 18). I share her disgust with the countless pigs gorging themselves on Capitol Hill. But making it illegal to petition government will only worsen matters by driving lobbying underground.

Pigs pack Washington because Congress openhandedly slops them. This problem won't be solved by quixotic commands that pigs stop squealing for the slop that Congress eagerly dispenses; the only solution is to prevent Congress from dispensing so much slop.

17 March 2006

Editor, The New Orleans
Times-Picayune

Dear Editor:

Liz Ary is upset that insurers in areas devastated by Katrina are raising premiums and, in some cases, canceling coverage. She wants the insurance commissioner "to address these issues" ("Insurance is an obstacle to rebuilding," March 17). While understandable, her dismay is misguided.

Higher premiums, as well as lack of coverage, reflect the reality that certain locations are especially dangerous for homes and businesses. These changes in insurance availability are the market's way of directing people to rebuild in places less prone to destruction by natural

disasters. They reflect, rather than determine, reality - a reality that must be faced squarely.

16 March 2006

Editor, The Wall Street
Journal
200 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10281

Dear Editor:

The data offered by Drug Czar John Walters to show that the drug war is worthwhile are so complex and nuanced that reasonable people can, and do, disagree on their proper interpretation (Letters, March 16). But one of Mr. Walter's non-empirical claims is patently absurd - namely, that illegal drugs are incompatible with freedom.

No one can be free if the state denies to him the freedom to act foolishly. If Mr. Walters truly wants to eradicate things that are incompatible with freedom, he should end the drug war ASAP.

15 March 2006

The Editor, USA Today

To the Editor:

You quote Clyde Prestowitz's lament that "our economy is on life support from foreign lenders and investors" ("Some would like to build a wall around U.S. economy," March 15). Such investment does indeed help the U.S. economy. But why call it "life support"? If investment in the U.S. were supplied only by Americans, would Mr. Prestowitz say that "our economy is on life support from domestic lenders and investors"?

Foreigners, like Americans, invest here not to rescue the economy but because such investments offer attractive returns. And these attractive returns exist because the U.S. economy is healthy rather than ailing.

14 March 2006

Editor, The Boston Globe

Dear Editor:

I do not object to gay and lesbian couples adopting children. But I disagree with Joyce Kauffman that Catholic Charities is acting immorally by ending its adoption services in light of the Massachusetts legislature's

command that no adoption agency discriminate against homosexual couples ("Ignoring children's needs is true immorality," March 14).

Catholic Charities is a voluntary faith-based institution. Why should adherents to that faith be forced to choose between remaining true to their Catholic creed - which objects to adoption by gays and lesbians - and continuing to facilitate adoptions? Why should government impose this especially onerous tax on persons who generously give their time and resources to others? Are orphaned children now better off in Massachusetts?

13 March 2006

Editor, The Atlantic Monthly
600 New Hampshire Ave.,
NW
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Editor:

To help commemorate The Atlantic's sesquicentennial (April 2006), you reprint part of Henry Demarest Lloyd's muckraking attack on Standard Oil.

The thesis of Lloyd's "Monopoly on the March" - first published in the March 1881 issue of your magazine - is that Standard Oil was a dangerous monopolist that

could be controlled only by the national government. But the very first sentence of Lloyd's essay is evidence against his thesis: "Kerosene has become, by its cheapness, the people's light the world over." Indeed.

A true monopolist raises prices and restricts output. Standard Oil did the opposite. Between 1870 and 1890 - the year the Sherman Antitrust Act was passed - kerosene's price fell 72 percent, from 26 cents per gallon to seven and three-eighths cents per gallon. The large market share that Standard Oil enjoyed during this era resulted from nothing more than Rockefeller's intrepid quest for efficiencies that enabled his firm to keep cutting its prices.