



Comment on the Commentary of the Day

by

Donald J. Boudreaux
Chairman, Department of Economics
George Mason University
dboudrea@gmu.edu
<http://www.cafehayek.com>

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.

10 March 2007

The Editor, The Times-Picayune

To the Editor:

You correctly point out that "stronger buildings are safer buildings" ("Help for building codes," March 10). But it does not follow that Louisianans will, in general, live and work in safer buildings if building codes are toughened.

Tougher building codes raise the cost of replacing old structures with new ones. So with tougher codes, some old homes and buildings that would have been razed and built anew will, instead, remain standing and occupied.

Such structures will likely be weaker than even those that would have replaced them in the absence of toughened building codes.

It's important always to keep in mind such unintended consequences.

9 March 2007

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

To the Editor:

You are too quick to call January's fall in the U.S. trade deficit "positive" ("Stocks Rise on Jobs Report," March 9).

What if the trade deficit fell because foreigners now find America to be a less-attractive place to invest? What if foreigners' confidence in the dollar is fading? Would these developments - which shrink the trade deficit - be "positive"?

9 March 2007

Editor, USA Today

To the Editor:

You argue that documented abuses by credit-card issuers show that Congress must regulate the consumer-credit industry more heavily ("When interest rates hit 32%, there ought to be a law," March 9).

I disagree. The case for keeping politicians from meddling in markets does not rest on the claim that businesses never misbehave. Instead, it rests on the understanding that politicians attempting to correct that misbehavior will likely make matters worse.

Consider that it would be easy to fill time at a Congressional hearing with documented errors and abuses committed by America's free press. One that comes to mind is the 12-year run of false and plagiarized reports in your own pages by reporter Jack Kelley. Should Congress conclude from this abuse of the public trust that the First Amendment has failed? Should we Americans repeal that Amendment so that Congress can "set some markers" designed to

keep you and other news media from misleading us in the future?

8 March 2007

Editor, Boston Globe

To the Editor:

Re your editorial on immigration-officials' raid on the Michael Bianco, Inc. plant in New Bedford ("The Mess After the Raid," March 8): As a result of this raid, Uncle Sam is now detaining 350 allegedly illegal immigrants against their will.

While you identify some genuine inconsistencies in immigration policy, you slip into an inconsistency of your own when you agree with the government that "Company officials should be prosecuted for exploiting workers." Who, in this case, is the party inflicting most harm on

these 350 foreigners - the company that employed and paid them, or the government that is now imprisoning them until they are forcibly deported?

6 March 2007

The Editor, The New York Post

Dear Editor:

Conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center truly are deplorable ("Sick Army Hosps," March 6). This is an institution - a "flagship"! - at the heart of Uncle Sam's system of socialized medical care for military personnel.

So remind me why many politicians and pundits clamor for socialized medical care for ALL Americans.