

EDITORIAL

LETTERS Plan to allow psychologists to prescribe drugs was dumb

MARK C. HUTTO, M.D., Atlanta

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The Editors: Unnoticed in the political struggle in Washington to reduce the deficit and balance the budget is how the House Republican leadership identified and killed a dangerous waste of taxpayer dollars in the 1996 defense budget. They terminated a program to turn psychologists into "junior doctors" through a cram course in prescribing complex medications.

This Defense Department psychology prescribing demonstration was termed ill-conceived and ill-founded by an Air Force surgeon general who noted that psychologists are not prepared to practice medicine. Psychologists are friends and colleagues who have an important role to play as mental health professionals, but no cram course in psychopharmacology can substitute for four years of medical school and four years of supervised medical residency training.

The program is an example of pork-barrel manipulation of the budget. Worse, military personnel and their dependents and retirees became guinea pigs for a dangerous idea to permit behavioral scientists to give out potentially dangerous drugs.

Hutto practices general psychiatry. Work on basics ROBERT McEWIN, Lawrenceville

The Editors: GCTV has asked for permission to provide phone service to their subscribers. I am a GCTV subscriber. I would never purchase phone service from GCTV. I have been in Atlanta for six years and during that time have lost phone service exactly once, when our house was hit by lightning. I cannot count the times GCTV has lost its signal during mere thunderstorms.

GCTV, work on your reliability before trying to sell me phone service. Where's outcry? RON N. BUTLER, Powder Springs

The Editors: As part of an insane campaign against technological society, the Unabomber monkey-wrenched the U.S. air transportation system. Since 1978, he has murdered three people and maimed two dozen more. In 1979, only his own incompetence kept him from destroying an airliner.

Where is the media outcry against deaths caused by left-wing environmentalist sabotage? Where are the stories about the danger to society posed by environmental extremist organizations? Why is not the president agonizing that the rhetoric of Vice President Gore's "Earth in the Balance" and other, more alarmist publications may have pushed unstable people to acts of violence?

Never mind. They are rhetorical questions. Expensive probe BILL WILLIAMS, Woodstock

The Editors: When will the politicians in D.C. wake up? The cost of the Whitewater investigations is at \$14.9 million and counting. Pull the plug on this waste of taxpayer dollars. There is only \$100,000 to be recovered! I guess this is justified politically. A simple plan ROBERT BLAKEMORE, Bowdon

The Editors: In the ministry of Promise Keepers, when man gets in a right relationship with God and accepts his God-ordained position, naturally the rest of his relationships are in proper order. The Bible teaches that a woman should be submissive to her husband. Equally important, the man should love his wife as Christ loved the church.

If men would follow this simple plan, there's not a woman alive who would not submit and enjoy it - to rest her life in the hands of a husband who would always lift her up and give her first place in his life, never intentionally doing anything that would cause her pain. In the doghouse DICK FUNDERBURK, Decatur

The Editors: A real estate agent placed plastic American flags along the curbs of our neighborhood for the Fourth of July. I really did not mind because all the waving little flags looked rather nice.

However, while I was walking my dogs, one urinated on a flag. My first thought was that my dog could be arrested if next year Congress and the state legislatures agree on a constitutional amendment banning such actions. The definition of desecration will be left up to the states or localities. Should both my dog and I have to go to jail, do you think we will be incarcerated together in the dog pound or in the federal pen in Atlanta? Strange reasoning JOHN T. CONWAY, Mableton

The Editors: If the U.S. flag represents "this nation's most basic constitutional freedom, freedom of speech," then I cannot understand the rationale of Rep. John Lewis and the editorial board of the Journal on the issue. To destroy the symbol is tantamount to destroying the reality it represents. Therefore, an act of free speech that destroys the flag in effect destroys itself. If you condone desecrating the flag, do so because you feel it represents some social evil, but not under the pretext of free speech. Tighten embargo JOHN H. FOSTER, Atlanta

The Editors: The "In My Opinion" letter titled "U.S. should intervene in Cuba" points out a problem that is getting worse in Cuba. Why can't the embargo be enforced? The people who sneak into Cuba by way of another country and spend money there are supporting Fidel Castro. Tighten the embargo and the Castro brothers will leave in less than six months.

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