



Tax refunds won't help unemployed

[FINAL Edition]

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Letters

USA TODAY appears to have swung from reporting the dire realities ordinary Americans continue to face in this largely jobless economic "recovery" to outright cheerleading for the Bush administration ("Tax refunds expected to jump 27%," News, Friday).

Larger tax refunds, it reported, "will" bolster the economy and "will ultimately" help millions of unemployed workers. Not "may," but "will." Even more incredibly, the article contains an economist's assurance that the heretofore woeful economy actually will become an asset for President Bush.

These statements might surprise millions of Americans who have lost jobs, had wages and bonuses frozen, witnessed white-collar jobs join manufacturing jobs in being exported overseas, faced rising health care costs and watched their retirement savings go up in smoke -- all on Bush's watch.

The anticipated increase in tax refunds won't help Americans who have been unable to secure suitable employment.

John Woodmaska

Kearny, N.J.

We're all Americans

While reader M. Johnson may feel it is disheartening that some people "defend" the Confederate flag, it is much more disheartening to see so many people waste their time and energy worrying about such trivial things ("Confederate flag," Letters, Friday).

He asks, "Would a Native American enjoy it if a banner for Christopher Columbus were waved in his face?" As someone descended from that culture, I really wouldn't care.

Yes, my ancestors were mistreated, enslaved and cheated. But the symbols of that time no longer have any meaning to society at large. In fact, if I were to use Johnson's logic, we would need to dispose of the American flag, as the historic treatment of America's indigenous people is a black eye on all Americans and should be offensive to me.

We spend too much time trying to establish our differences, rather than working to establish a national identity.

Hyphenated names such as African-American, Irish-American, etc., do more to divide our great nation than they ever will do to bring us together. Simply, we're all Americans.

As long as we, as individuals or as a nation, allow someone else to define who and what we are, we never will realize the full measure of greatness inherent in this United States of America.

Brodie Seider

Murfreesboro, Tenn.

'Tone up respect'

I was absolutely appalled when reading the commentary about teen killers and their need to prove their masculinity. But the most appalling thing is that the article didn't even surprise me ("Teen killers feel trapped by masculine stereotypes," The Forum, Nov. 12).

In my consulting business, I have made a point to study the huge impact the lack of fundamental social skills has on our education system, children, businesses and communities.

How many dollars must be wasted in our schools because teachers spend so much time dealing with behavior issues that they can't teach effectively?

How many kids have to die before the public recognizes that our kids are not learning basic respect?

This is a serious problem.

And the proposed solution in this article on how to end this murderous, vengeful behavior: "Tone down masculinity"?

Well, the most unmasculine male in the world still may fail to be civil in day-to-day interactions.

When statistics show one out of four kids will be involved in a serious violent event before they reach high school, clearly our current way of doing things is not working.

The article sadly misses the point. While we argue about anti-bullying laws and spend more on "tolerance training," why don't we consider prevention, not just remediation?

Instead of toning down teenagers' masculinity, I suggest a better solution: "Tone up respect."

Corinne Gregory, president

The PoliteChild Inc.

Woodinville, Wash.

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