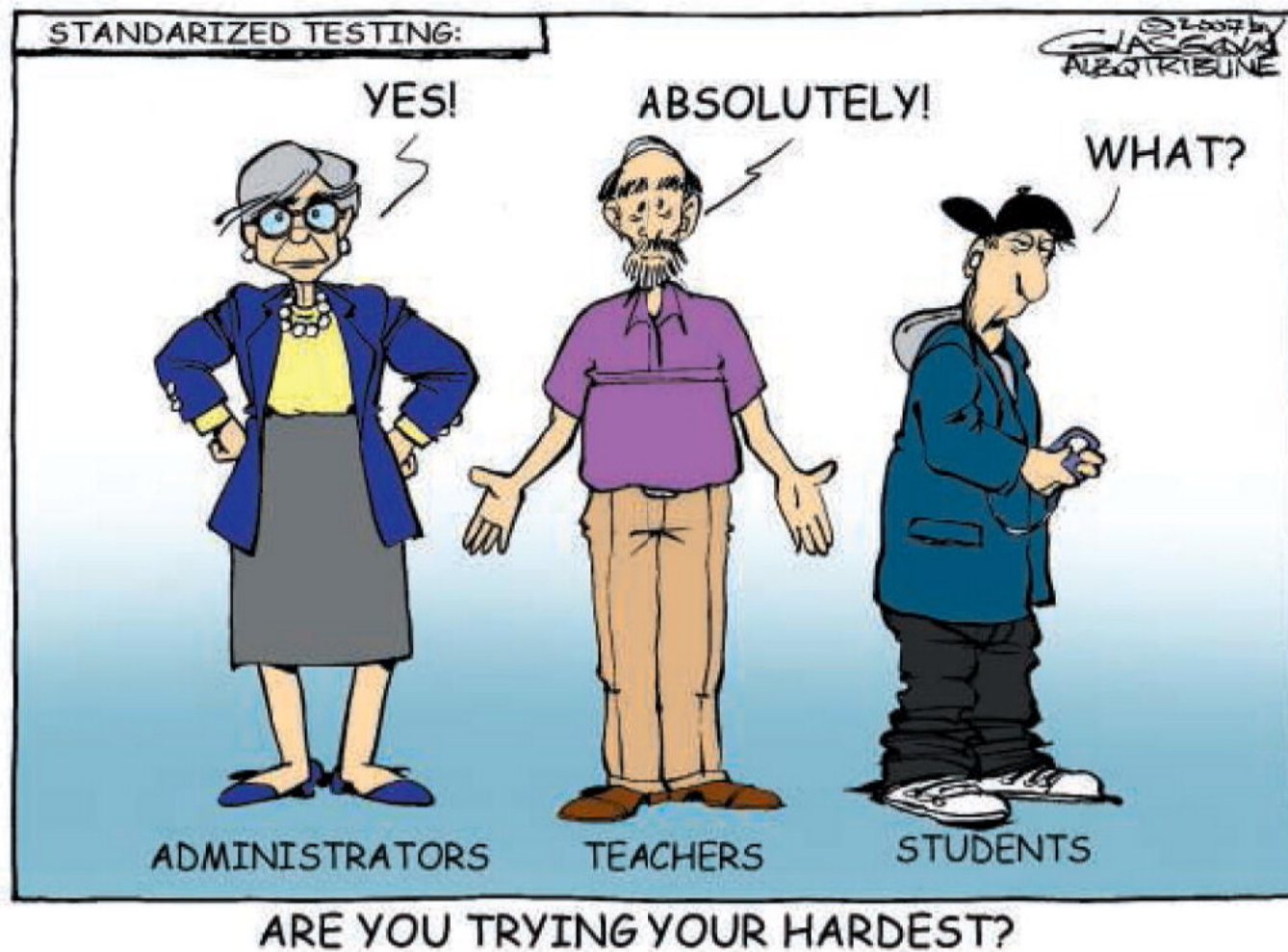


GLASGOW'S VIEW



Future funding

Bush's proposed budget is bad for New Mexico's kids

By Sharon Kayne

President Bush's budget proposal for 2008 is a double whammy for our country's children.

If passed as is, not only would it burden today's children with an ever-growing federal deficit, but it would cut funding for the very kinds of programs that are needed today to prepare them to enter the work force and meet such a fiscal challenge.

Under Bush's budget, our children will be less prepared for school, will be educated by a scaled-down public school system, will get less preventive health care, and will be less likely to live in a home that's heated in the winter and that provides enough to eat year-round.

Yet they will face a future in which they are burdened with paying off an enormous federal debt.

They will probably face greater health problems because they will live in an environment that's even more polluted than it is today.

And, unfortunately, with the investment in health research being slashed today, they will enjoy fewer medical advances than their parents currently do.

The bottom line for New Mexico, should the president get his way, would be a cut of more than \$126 million in programs such as education, home heating assistance, child care, environmental protection, community services and more.

In 2008 alone, 10,600 New Mexicans would be left out in the cold — literally — because they would lose their Low Income Home Energy Assistance.

Every one of our state's seniors now re-

TODAY'S BYLINE

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lying on a supplemental food assistance program would be left hungry, as that lifeline will be cut completely. If those seniors also happen to be part of the growing population of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, those kids will go hungry, too.

Of course, instead of cutting programs for our most vulnerable residents, New Mexico could fill these funding cuts with money out of the state's coffers. That would almost certainly mean raising taxes so the state could have the money it would need.

Both the funding cuts and the growing deficit are due largely to the president's tax cuts for the wealthy, which he's asking Congress to make permanent. Doing so would cost the country \$2.3 trillion over the next ten years. The budget also calls for billions in war-related spending.

Bush wants to continue giving those folks with annual incomes of \$400,000 tax "relief" of \$67,000 a year. That's almost twice what the typical New Mexican household lives on over the same time period.

Bush's budget continues the work he's been doing to help the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Income inequality — already disturbingly high — would only get worse under this budget.

With income inequality comes social unrest; when poverty spikes, crime spikes.

But we'll be less able to deal with it, because Bush wants to cut millions from our community policing programs.

So, while Bush's budget would ensure a well-funded military, it will make the streets in our neighborhoods more dangerous.

His budget also sends the message that "we are not all in this together"; that a tiny minority of Americans stand above the rest of us; that the wealthy are the people the government is here to take care of, despite the fact that they can well afford to take care of themselves; that the wealthy's concerns override those of us who make up the backbone of this country's work force; that Americans who work at jobs that don't pay a living wage or provide the security of health care coverage don't really matter.

His budget sends the message that the \$67,000-a-year tax break for the wealthy is more important than educating our future work force, than making sure our aging parents have enough to eat or our working families can afford to heat their homes.

It says that our government is "by, for and of" the financially elite.

A budget is a moral document. It is our priorities put into action. Despite Bush's recent rhetoric, this particular budget is simply an extension of the pay-to-play politics that have marked this administration since its beginning.

It is fiscally irresponsible and, as the president himself admits, "unsustainable." This budget does not make our economic future a priority. It does not make our children a priority.