

## SPOTLIGHT LETTER

### A nice idea, at first

At first glance, nice sounding ideas have general appeal.

If, as an example, however, you care about one-of-a-kind, "mom and pop," local, unique restaurants/cafes, a higher minimum wage is the fastest way to put those owners out of business and keep new, potential small business owners from taking the financial risk. They likely will not have the

"deep pockets" that wealthier owners have. Full-service restaurants will be at a disadvantage to fast food.

At first glance, one doesn't think about the teens who don't get hired for that first job because it costs too much — or the jobs that don't get created.

Grace Schmitt, St. Paul

### ACA changed a life

For the past three years, the "facts" behind the Affordable Care Act have been hard to grasp. We were told we'd only know how successful it could be upon implementation. It's changed at least one person's life.

In January, a severely injured client from a car crash called our office with "good news." After being let go from her job because of her injuries and missing work, she lost her group health insurance. Her no-fault auto insurance coverage had run out, and her individual health plan contained a pre-existing condition clause. Her new 2014 plan contains no such pre-existing condition limitation. For the past nine months, unable to pay for recommended therapies, she could only treat her condition with pain pills and using sick days.

Because the ACA now forbids insurance companies from exempting coverage for pre-existing conditions, my client can finally receive the spinal injections needed to manage her pain, which keeps her from missing work. Her experience leads me to believe we're on the right track.

Richard J. Schroeder, Hugo  
The writer is an attorney.

Congress refuse to raise any taxes, even if it is to pay for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. If Mr. Stocum and the congressional Republicans refuse to raise taxes, then they own responsibility for the debt, not Obama and the Democrats.

I find it hard to believe Mr. Stocum is committed to fix the debt when he appears to be committed to blaming others.

If Mr. Stocum is intent on eliminating the debt, then he should specifically say how he would do it. I would do it by raising everyone's taxes.

Lyle Nelson, St. Paul

### A 'war for women'?

At a recent National Republican Committee event, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee stated that, contrary to the Democratic contention of a Republican Party "war on women" — the party is, actually, conducting a "war for women."

He asserted that Democratic orthodoxy implies "women are nothing more than helpless and hopeless creatures" — and then further observed: "Democrats want to insult the women of America by making them believe that they are helpless without Uncle Sugar coming in and providing for them a prescription each month for birth control, because they cannot control their libido or their reproductive system without the help of the government."

Huckabee dared to challenge the liberal establishment's "bigger government is better government" core philosophy. His remarks have precipitated a lib-

eral-establishment, climactic rush to judgment.

Huckabee is charged with being libidino liable.

Gene Delaune, New Brighton

### Sustain Q-Comp

As a teacher in the Anoka-Hennepin schools, we have begun our first year of Q-Comp, the state's teacher evaluation system. In the first couple of months, my second-grade level team set up goals based on what we felt the students needed.

As a team, we felt students were lacking the abilities and strategies in mathematics, most notably addition at a second-grade level. Our initial data matched our concerns; about 28 percent of students were proficient in addition. We developed new goals, action plans and gave our students five-minute quizzes designed to measure growth and analyze strategies. After two months, our grade now has more than 68 percent of the students proficient and using multiple strategies.

With four months left of school, my team and I hope to target our instruction and have every child proficient. This work was being done before Q-Comp was implemented, but Q-Comp helped move these classroom instructional strategies that teachers use, into school- and district-wide levels.

The Minnesota Legislature and former Gov. Pawlenty need to be congratulated for the program, and I hope our current Legislature and governor can help sustain this program for Minnesota's teachers and students.

John Hartig, St. Paul

## > Other voice The farm deserves

In two recent speeches Dec. 4 oration on income inequality and his State Union address Tuesday President Obama proclaimed commitment to fairness, equal opportunity. In the address, he called inequity "the defining challenge of our time"; in the latter, he used executive action to So we hope Mr. Obama pick up the phone, call Congress and tell them he's prepared to veto pen for the 2014 farm bill is only a slight exaggeration say that this legislative querie gives to the rich takes from the poor.

Tipping the financial \$956 billion over 10 years, \$1 billion per page, the bill is supposedly a bill that reforms crop subsidy. To be sure, it eliminates that gave billions each year payments" to farmers re individual need or economic conditions, and it incentivizes private soil conservation programs.

But what the bill takes away from the farm lobby with one hand, it takes back with the other. Of \$4 billion projected savings (over 10 years) eliminating direct payments restores \$27.2 billion via crop insurance subsidies program that "insures against adverse price movements by necessary to secure the food supply at a time of rising income and epidemic obesity. eral largess flows almost of how much money has already been paid. People ma

### Fix debt; raise taxes

My right honorable friend, Chuck Stocum, didn't give the whole story in his column ("Commit to 'fix the debt,'" Jan. 28).

Our national debt could be erased literally overnight if Congress would simply raise everyone's taxes.

Remember the Republicans in