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Editorial | Letters

Letters to the Editor

By [Star-Advertiser staff](#)

March 17, 2013

Cutting tuition aid for military shameful

As someone who worked as site director for Embry Riddle University for 10 years in its accelerated education program designed primarily for the military, first at Kaneohe and then at Hickam, I am well aware of the importance of tuition assistance for young enlisted men and women trying to earn a college degree while still performing their full-time, active-duty responsibilities.

However, this assistance was terminated March 1 as a result of the \$85 billion in automatic federal spending cuts required under sequestration ("Air Force drops tuition aid because of spending cuts," Star-Advertiser, March 13).

After watching the president and Congress behave like children, it is obvious that both parties are playing the blame game regarding sequestration, have no desire to solve the problem and are more concerned about the future of their own parties instead of the future of our young men and women in our military service. And that's a shame.

Robert L. Dixon

Lt. Colonel, U.S. Air Force, retired

Makiki

Cancel fighter jets and fund education

A recent Star-Advertiser article highlighted the dysfunctionality of the \$400 billion F-35 fighter program. In fact, this aircraft, the most expensive warplane in history, is currently grounded as unsafe to fly.

The F-35 story provides a wonderful example of how military spending is undermining

our economy and our country.

We all know that the crisis in K-12 education amounts to perhaps the greatest threat to U.S. well-being and national security.

Meanwhile, each F-35 costs \$137 million. The Hawaii Department of Education budget is \$1.35 billion. So say we don't produce 10 of the F-35s and transfer the money to our underfunded DOE: This would immediately double our state education budget and provide a wealth of resources for our students. Cancel a hundred of the F-35s and we could spread the wealth to other states.

Let's get our priorities straight.

Noel Kent

Kaimuki

Police chief mistaken to not trust citizens

With the Honolulu Police Department replacing its old pistols with Glock 17 pistols, what will the department do with the old pistols ("[HPD gives up old guns for Glock 17 pistols](#)," *Star-Advertiser*, March 14)?

Chief Louis Kealoha says, "Our fear, especially with what's going on in the states and different communities, is we put more guns on the street. I don't think that's what we need."

I would expect that the police would not be foolish enough to sell guns to just anyone. They would need background checks to ensure that they had no criminal records or mental issues. Despite that, the chief says, "I don't think that's what we need."

So, he doesn't trust those who pass the background checks. Really? He doesn't trust civilians, as though police don't commit crimes.

The problem is not the guns; it's the people. Let's try trusting the law-abiding citizen and not trusting criminals, and don't blame the gun.

Michael Lee

Maunalani Heights

Elections vulnerable to corporate influence

House Bill 1481 seeks to provide a critical update for our public funding option for elections.

It would help address the culture of dependence upon special-interest money that is now a greater threat than ever to the integrity of our democracy, thanks to U.S. Supreme Court deregulation framed largely as a matter of freedom of speech.

But the real issue is not freedom of speech. Rather it is the difference between natural

and artificial persons. When we as natural, human persons make choices that will have an effect on others, we can mediate between our self-interest and the public interest. Indeed, I believe, this tension is the crucible of human consciousness.

Artificial persons such as for-profit corporate entities, however — which serve important functions but are "persons" only in the derivative, legal fiction sense — do not arise from a rich polar dynamic of ethical choice. They exist to maximize profit for their shareholders.

HB 1481 would help make it possible for our candidates who choose the public funding option to be "dependent on the people alone," as James Madison put it.

R. Elton Johnson III

Kaneohe

More balance needed in tourism reporting

Your front-page article last Sunday "[Visitor growth prompts warning](#)" and the adjoining "[Isles are near a 'tipping point' to boost capacity](#)" (Star-Advertiser, March 10) were painfully one-sided, consisting almost exclusively of opinions of self-interested individuals who stand to gain financially from the continued pouring of cement upon our tiny fragile island.

Of two pages of text, only one small paragraph questioned the wisdom of cramming yet more hotels into Waikiki and the North Shore. Given the presence of our choked, potholed roads and over-capacity sewers, more balanced coverage would have at least given a nod to sustainability issues, which were sadly absent in this puff piece.

Prominently running such a blatantly one-sided article in your news pages opens you to charges of being a shill for the developer class.

Ken Sentner

Moilili

Kudos to parties that finished Mahiko Gym

As a longtime Ewa Villages resident and father of three children, my family and I are grateful for the Mahiko Gym finally opening ("[Delayed Ewa gym finally opens](#)," Star-Advertiser, March 12).

We have been waiting a very long time for a safe park and gym facility in our neighborhood.

Thanks to the contractor, 57 Builders, for sticking with the city and for getting the job done. The work they've done is appreciated today and will be for many years.

Jason Guerrero

Ewa

Unlicensed, uninsured drivers clogging roads

I agree with Bob Uyeda's comments ("[Too many vehicles on road illegally](#)," *Star-Advertiser, Letters, March 14*), but imagine if we not only got those with expired safety checks and registrations off the road, but all unlicensed and uninsured drivers off the streets as well.

How often do we read about accidents involving unlicensed or suspended-licensed drivers or uninsured vehicles on our streets?

Imagine if we enforced these requirements; we probably could get at least 10 percent of the vehicles off our roads and highways.

Jerry Yamauchi

Lower Manoa

State happy to ignore resolving HSTA feud

The state unethically imposed a "last, best and final offer" on the Hawaii State Teachers Association in collective bargaining, and the union took it to the Hawaii Labor Relations Board for a fair and impartial prohibited-practice hearing.

The immediate pay cuts and increased health care premiums for teachers went into effect years ago, the prohibited-practice hearing went on for nine months, and now there is a delay in the ruling.

Our government is in no hurry for a ruling and it happily continues to collect our taxes, pay our teachers less, and underfund the agencies that are in place to protect the people's rights.

By the time this is resolved the government will have banked enough money to pay teachers what they were getting before they went into collective bargaining, but more likely it will be less.

The people of Hawaii are not getting what they have paid for.

Bruce Black

Diamond Head

How to write us

The Star-Advertiser welcomes letters that are crisp and to the point (~150 words). The Star-Advertiser reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Please direct comments to the issues; personal attacks will not be published. Letters must be signed and include a daytime telephone number.

Letter form: [Online form, click here](#)

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