

San Francisco Chronicle

Letters to the Editor, Jan. 31, 2016

Power of protest

Regarding “MLK bridge blockade draws on long history” (Jan. 23): Protests by Martin Luther King Jr. did result in change, and the protest on his holiday could help bring change as well. What would also help would be the follow-up of citizens speaking to their representatives. That is what recently helped make permanent the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, which keep 16 million Americans from falling into — or deeper into — poverty. The Earned Income Tax Credit could be extended to childless adults in the low-income bracket as well. So write or call your legislators to provide this ladder out of poverty, continuing the work of Dr. King.

Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.

San Francisco Chronicle

Letters to the Editor, March 13, 2016

Global problem

Thank you for presenting the human face of America's continuing AIDS epidemic. Though HIV/AIDS seems under control in America, there are still nearly 50,000 (2013) new infections each year, almost 14,000 deaths (2012) and less than half receive antiretroviral treatment (2011). The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is making great progress to control AIDS in our world, thanks to funding from America and other countries and private donors. This year, the Global Fund is seeking another three-year funding commitment. Without this, all three diseases will roar back and be harder to treat. This is our opportunity to create an AIDS-free world. To ensure Congress acts, please contact your representatives and senators and ask them to robustly fund this life-saving organization. Let's make everyone a survivor.

Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.

San Francisco Chronicle

Letters to the Editor, March 31, 2016

Eradicate TB

I was heartened to read Dr. Ed Zuroweste's "Tuberculosis on rise again" (Open Forum, March 29). To delay funding for treatment, research and eventual eradication of this disease would be a disastrous mistake. It is far more insidious and widespread than most people realize, and is becoming tougher to treat as multidrug-resistant mutations occur. I would like to add, please contact not just our senators, but your representative, and ask him or her to support adequate funding for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. This worthwhile program has saved millions of lives and is worthy of our foreign aid tax dollars.

Lisa Schliff, Richmond

EAST BAY TIMES

April 16 letters to the editor

Letters to the editor | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: April 15, 2016 at 1:18 pm

Obama must help in the nutrition battle

When we were born, those caring for us sought to ensure that we got the nutrition we needed to grow and develop properly. But lacking proper nutrition during the critical 1,000-day window between pregnancy and age two, many children die. Others are stunted, meaning their brains and bodies are irreversibly underdeveloped.

Ensuring kids get a healthy start to life is about more than food aid or adding calories to their diet. It's about making sure pregnant women, infants and toddlers have access to the essential nutrition they need and not simply the calories.

When world leaders gather at the Nutrition for Growth Summit later this year, President Barack Obama should be there to commit \$500 million toward nutrition-specific efforts in the last year of his administration. And Congress should support this investment as well. What better Mother's and Father's Day gift could there be in the world?

Sue Oehser
Oakland

Marin Voice: US support for Global Fund fight against TB needed

By Gail Dolson

Thursday, June 23, 2016

Dr. Uvitra Naido, in his opinion piece in the May 19 New York Times, “Eliminate the TB Scrooge,” made the correct assessment that tuberculosis is one of the world’s most deadly infectious diseases, second only to AIDS.

There are an estimated 9 million new cases every year or about 24,000 every day.

Many people who contract TB have drug-resistant forms, making it difficult to treat and eradicate. An estimated 1.5 million people worldwide die each year from this ancient bacterium.

TB usually attacks the lungs, but can lodge in any part of the body and is easily spread through the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs.

Even people flying who are contagious can spread TB in an airplane because some of the air in a plane is circulated through the air ducts and people who are in the early infectious stages of tuberculosis are generally unaware of their diagnosis.

Tuberculosis can be managed and in many cases contained.

The cost of treatment is about \$40 in low- and middle-income countries and \$50 in more affluent nations, but those costs can easily triple if the bacterium become resistant to first line drugs.

There have not been any new drugs introduced in the last 20 years and tremendous growth of highly drug-resistant strains of TB. And since 2004, there has been a 29 percent decrease in the death rate from TB in countries where the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria invests.

This organization is a 21st-century public-private partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and people affected by the disease.

The Global Fund does not itself administer programs, but rather provides grants to individuals, organizations and government agencies in affected countries that submit qualified grant proposals, thus developing local capacity and providing local control for these lifesaving programs.

Thus far, 125 countries are participating with the global fund in TB treatment and elimination projects.

The Global Fund operates with a high degree of transparency in all of its work, including applications for funding and oversight.

You can track every dollar on its website.

Additionally, it ensures a minimum of waste and corruption because programs must demonstrate effectiveness and stay within their projected budgets and stand up to rigorous audits or funding sources are not renewed for the project.

The United States is a leader in supporting the Global Fund, which encourages other nations to “step up to the plate.”

The U.S. should continue its leadership role when the world comes together on Sept. 16 in Canada to ensure that the fund raises the \$13 billion needed for the next three years of programs

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria can make a huge difference for millions of people all over the globe, especially in poor and developing countries.

It also makes us safer at home by addressing diseases like TB at its source rather than letting it travel around the globe.

This is important to us because last year alone there were 2,137 new cases of TB in the United States. There were nine new cases in Marin and Sonoma counties and 31 in San Francisco, proving that everything global is also local and not to be ignored.

I want to thank Rep. Jared Huffman for his commitment to our well-being by becoming part of the TB elimination task force in Washington.

Now is the time for him to take a leading role in pushing for the president and Congress to expand our support for the Global Fund before the world meets in September in Canada.

Gail Dolson of San Rafael is a nurse practitioner and a member of RESULTS, a citizen activist and advocacy group committed to the eradication of poverty in the U.S. and globally.

My view: Tuberculosis still a threat today

By Gail Dolson

For the Deseret News

Published: July 18, 2016 12:00 a.m.

In 1965 as a young student nurse, I worked in a tuberculosis unit in a county hospital in New York City and I contracted a TB infection that has not developed into disease. This means TB bacterium lies dormant inside my body, ready to become active should I have any major alteration in my health.

One third of the world's population carries the bacteria, according to the CDC, and 35 percent of these individuals have other medical conditions such as diabetes mellitus, end stage renal disease, HIV or another immunosuppressive condition that can increase their risk of developing TB disease. In Africa and Asia, people with HIV contract and die from tuberculosis because their weakened immune systems are unable to fight off TB. Tuberculosis is the world's oldest and most lethal disease. It even is prevalent in Utah, where 37 new cases were diagnosed in 2015.

This doesn't have to be so. Since 2004, countries that receive investments from the Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB and Malaria have seen a 29 percent decrease in the death rate from TB, proving that TB can be managed and in many cases contained.

The Global Fund is a 21st century public-private partnership among governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by AIDS, TB and malaria. The Global Fund does not administer programs, it provides grants to individuals, organizations and government agencies in countries that submit qualified proposals. In this way the Global Fund develops local capacity and infrastructure. Presently, 125 countries are participating with the Global Fund in TB treatment and elimination projects.

The Global Fund operates with a high degree of transparency in all of its work, and every dollar it spends can be tracked on its website. Plus, its oversight ensures a minimum of waste and corruption because programs must demonstrate effectiveness, stay within their projected budgets and stand up to rigorous audits or lose their funding.

Worldwide, 24,000 people are diagnosed with TB every day, amounting to 9 million people each year. Over 4,000 people die from TB each day, totaling at least 1.5 million deaths per year. Many people, especially in developing countries, have drug resistant forms, making their disease more difficult to treat. In the U.S., 9,565 people were diagnosed with it in 2015, the first increase in 23 years. Tuberculosis is transmitted through the air in tiny droplets when a person with disease sneezes, coughs, laughs or sings. Despite the staggering loss of life and illness that TB causes, only one new drug to treat it was brought to market during the past 20 years.

Of Utah's 37 new cases last year, 64 percent were in the Salt Lake City area. Over the last five years, eight cases involved children under the age of 5, according to the Utah Department of Health. TB's global trends affect us at home and should not be ignored.

The United States is a leader in supporting the Global Fund, and that should continue when donor nations meet Sept. 16 in Canada for a replenishment conference. The U.S. should honor its commitment to provide up to one-third of the \$13 billion the Global Fund needs for the next three years, and it should strongly encourage partner nations to support the fund as well.

I live with the TB bacterium lying dormant in my body, representing millions of people around the world, and I support the U.S. providing additional funding for the Global Fund to continue its lifesaving work. Please urge your congressional representatives, senators and President Obama to support additional financing for the Global Fund before the September meeting in Canada.

Gail Dolson is a nurse practitioner and a member of RESULTS — a citizen activist/advocacy group committed to the eradication of poverty in the U.S. and globally.

The Sacramento Bee

Letters to the editor | July 02, 2016 12:00 AM

Zika funding needs our input

Re “Gridlock in Congress gets dangerous” (Editorials, June 30): Excellent editorial showing the problematic side of Congress in its effort or lack thereof, in passing the funding to battle the Zika virus.

Keep in mind, there has been good work in the past, like robustly funding the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and malaria. The results from that funding are millions of lives saved and the possibility of controlling these three pandemics on the horizon if the funding continues.

Perhaps it’s because so many people wrote or called their representatives asking them to vote for that funding. So let’s try it with Zika: Call or write your representatives and ask them to pass the \$1.9 billion.

Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.

Read more here: <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article87230002.html>

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The Sacramento Bee

Letters to the editor | November 19, 2016 12:00 AM

Education can change the world

Re “Seeking hope in uncertain times” (Forum, Nov. 13): It’s excellent to seek hope in these uncertain days by depending on each other. Imagine being one of more than 100 million children and adolescents in our world who currently have no hope of going to school. Talk about uncertain futures.

Yet in their uncertain times, the Education for All Act has passed the House of Representatives and awaits action in the Senate. When this bill passes these children will have hope for education brings better health and earnings coupled with lower birth rates and less conflict.

Each of us can help this happen by asking our senators to support and pass this bipartisan bill (Senate Bill 3256). Over 100 million children are counting on us.

*Willie Dickerson,
Snohomish, Wash.*

Read more here: <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article115315783.html>

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The Mercury News

Dec. 3 Readers Letters

By Mercury News Readers |

Published: December 3, 2016 at 6:00 am

Bay Area must keep pushing to strengthen middle class

Most Donald Trump voters sought to drain the swamp of policy that serves a few elite but ignores ordinary Americans. I voted for Hillary Clinton, but I'm with them on that point. Now we must hold Trump to his promise as worrisome signs arise, like a tax plan that favors the wealthy, or murmurs of weakening Medicare, for instance. I appreciate the declaration of our Bay Area Congress members Zoe Lofgren, Anna Eshoo and Ro Khanna (Opinion, Nov. 27) to continue fighting to defend hard-working Americans from policy that promises to trickle wealth down to the rest of us — yet never does. Bay Area citizens and our representatives must keep pushing to strengthen the middle-class. Working stronger together we can make America great.

Georgia Platts
San Jose

Read more here: <http://www.mercurynews.com/2016/12/03/dec-3-readers-letters-measure-a-is-exactly-what-silicon-valley-needs/>

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EAST BAY TIMES

Dec. 5 letters to the editor

Letters to the editor | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: December 4, 2016 at 4:00 pm

Congress must keep promise to save lives

Dec. 1 was World AIDS Day. Each year on the first of December, World AIDS Day, a red ribbon hangs on the North Portico of the White House to commemorate the 35 million people who have lost their lives to the disease.

This year, advocates and public health experts hope that the new Congress and administration continues not just that symbolical gesture but that they will carry out the U.S. commitment to invest in the continued fight against AIDS worldwide.

Thanks, in part, to citizen advocacy, the U.S. made a bold promise of a \$4.3 billion matching fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria over the next three years. Millions of lives have been saved and millions more will be if the program is funded.

Susan Oehser
Oakland

Improving education improves everyone

While ignorance is bliss, it sometimes prevents hope and pride. Surveys show Americans think the federal government spends far more on foreign aid than the 1 percent it actually does. What should give us hope and pride, however, is how effective that aid has been when properly invested in programs making a difference.

For example, programs educating young children, especially girls, is like adding yeast to dough. For every year of school girls get above grade three or four, their income rise by 20 percent and their country's GDP by 0.58 percentage points. In 1999, 106 million children could not go to elementary school. By 2016 that number had dropped to 61 million because the U.S. and other developed countries helped countries less fortunate. The U.S. benefited too, since more than half our exports now go to less developed countries.

In Congress, the House already passed the Education for All Act. The Senate should do the same before it adjourns next month. Improving education improves everyone's future.

Jim Driggers
RESULTS group leader
Contra Costa Chapter
Concord

Lisa Schliff: Extreme global poverty impacts us all

December 23, 2016

I read with delight about the Deer Creek third-graders' fundraising for Heifer International (<http://www.theunion.com/news/local-news/deer-creek-third-graders-learn-the-gift-of-giving/>). This worthwhile organization has been instrumental in addressing poverty in the poorest countries. How great that our upcoming generation of children is learning to end global poverty!

However, lack of resources isn't the only hindrance to ending extreme poverty. Diseases are devastating families in developing countries. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria has saved over 20 million lives and will continue to provide treatment and health infrastructure for many poor people as long as it is adequately funded.

The United States has pledged \$4.3 billion dollars over the next three years to the Global Fund. Please contact Congressman Doug LaMalfa, or whoever is your member of Congress, to request that he support the renewal of the Global Fund.

Ending extreme global poverty, as the Deer Creek students learned, is the business of all of us if we want a peaceful and stable world for them to grow up in.

Lisa Schliff

Grass Valley

EAST BAY TIMES

December 26 letters to the editor

Letters to the editor | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: December 25, 2016 at 4:00 pm

World desperately needs bill to save lives of kids

I am a mother of two sons and three grandchildren. War never took my sons, which I am so grateful for and I hope my grandkids do not have that experience.

My outreach is to use my American clout to shout out for equality of good health for all mothers in our world as well as their new babies in the first 1,000 days when it is vital to have proper nutrition, for brain and body development and access to basic medical support and vaccines to keep them healthy.

RESULTS.org has been sharing advocacy for more than 35 years by cutting down more than half of young children dying every day. We are pushing world leaders to support nutrition programs and health care needs all children deserve.

RESULTS has already had volunteer advocates like myself secure more than 210 co-sponsors in this bipartisan bill called Reach Every Mother and Child Act. It will be the greatest tribute to mothers everywhere this new year 2017 to see this bill finally get approval from our new political leaders.

Marsha M. Joy
Walnut Creek