

**THE GLOBE AND MAIL** 

What readers think

## Feb. 23: Letters to the editor

From Wednesday's Globe and Mail

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**Informed policy**

The authors (Crunch The Numbers: Crime Rates Are Going Down – Feb. 22) quite rightly make the point that the Harper government's tough-on-crime agenda is not connected to the fact that overall crime rates both in Canada and the U.S. have been steadily declining since 1990. In large part, due to demographics.

In California, whose population is similar to Canada's, they got very enthusiastic about incarcerating people and drove their prison population to over 160,000, compared to Canada which has been relatively stable at around 35,000 in recent years. Now they are trying to substantively reduce their prison population, in large part because of the crushing cost.

When you consider that keeping one person in our prison system is around \$117,000 a year, you are left wondering why we are even considering throwing taxpayer money at an issue with a "solution" that has already shown itself ineffective.

*Dan Lang, Toronto*

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**Natural families**

How refreshing it was to read an academic of Margaret Somerville's standing referring to something so fundamental as a "natural family structure" (When Granny Is Mom, Something Is Wrong – Feb. 19). Yes, fundamental! This is something we have lost sight of in this age besotted by the mind-numbing and simplistic cult of equality.

It is out of the sexual conjunction of male and female that new human life normally comes into existence. The burden that falls to the female is infinitely greater. This reality requires some form of societal response, some provision for the female who accepts this unequal burden. This response comes in the legal contract we call marriage.

*Hugh G.W. Swandel, Ottawa*

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**Their own women**

I am glad to see The Globe putting women's rights at the forefront of coverage, as you did with the front-page editorial, (Our Time To Lead: Helping Afghanistan's Women – Feb. 21). But the patronizing

way in which you framed the issue left me angry and frustrated.

You write that, “Canada should accept our responsibility for the women of Afghanistan....” Please rid yourselves of the notion that a woman is ever anyone’s responsibility but her own. Was it not the thrust of this piece that women in Afghanistan are being denied the autonomy that is inherently theirs?

*Natalie McClure, Toronto*

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### **A question**

I have a question to ask Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty about his job cuts – where does he propose to start? (McGuinty Set To Drop Axe On Bureaucrats – Feb. 21).

With the correctional officers who guard accused murderers? With the inspectors who make sure our food is safe? With the caseworkers who help people with disabilities get the income they need for food and rent? With the communications officers who save lives by dispatching ambulances?

The fact is, Ontario already has a very lean public service. The Conservative government of Mike Harris slashed it in the mid-1990s. Ontario’s spending on government services is the second lowest in Canada.

*Warren (Smokey) Thomas, president, Ontario Public Service Employees Union*

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### **No, honey**

The Conservatives are trying to explain why Bev Oda called the defunding of Kairos a CIDA decision (Bev Oda: A Solid Minister, A Muddled Political Message – Feb. 19). Here’s their position: For this funding request, there was only one possible decision-maker, Minister Oda, and once she made a decision it became CIDA’s decision.

Flash forward to when this new Conservative logic becomes the norm: “Mom, can I go outside and play?” “No honey, your decision is to stay indoors today.”

*Jeff Culbert, London, Ont.*

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### **Conundrum**

Re Liberation Therapy MS Patients Decry Follow-Up Care (Feb. 19): Fleure-Ange Lefebvre, of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada, states that such authorities rely on medical experts to set standards of care after approved scientific research.

This is unfortunate as governments are doing little or nothing to undertake the necessary research. The MS Society of Canada is providing \$700,000 of \$7.3-million committed to research. This does not seem to show much commitment by the governments or the MS Society to determine if this therapy is effective or not.

In the meantime, I have a son who turns 50 this week and is deteriorating with MS from using a cane to a walker and now a wheelchair. Thank God he has a loving and caring family.

*Doug Allen, Maple, Ont.*

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### **Supporting prosecutors**

Crown prosecutors may be our adversaries in the courtroom but it is more than uncomfortable to witness them having to struggle for fair compensation (Top Quebec Prosecutors Rebel Against Back-To-Work Bill – Feb. 22).

They have enormously difficult and vital roles to play in the criminal justice system. Victims, witnesses, police, defence counsel, judges, the accused and the public all rely on them to be knowledgeable, communicative, fair, prepared and accountable in their decisions.

We urge the government of Quebec to go an extra mile and recognize the important contribution that our colleagues in the Crown's office make and revisit the compensation issue.

*William M. Trudell, Chair, Canadian Council of Criminal Defence Lawyers, Toronto*

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### **Expatriate Finns**

Re Let's Tap Into Our 'Global Canadians' – Feb. 22): In addition to the countries listed as having developed global initiatives to engage their respective diasporas – Finland has created something rather unique to engage its worldwide diaspora. Finland has created an Expatriate Parliament. It meets in general session every three years in Helsinki to debate and vote on various resolutions that affect the Finnish diaspora around the world. These resolutions are submitted to the federal parliament for action. In recent years, the adoption of dual citizenship was initiated by the expatriate parliament and passed into law.

*Bill Holt, Toronto*

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### **Not making it up**

This winter often saw the closing of highways in Ontario due to drifting snow and led me to wonder why Ontario no longer seemed to utilize snow fencing. I turned to the Ministry of Transport and learned that it indeed recognizes the effectiveness of both live and artificial snow fences, which led me to write to the minister asking why the government did not follow its own expertise.

I received a response signed by the minister acknowledging that snow fencing did indeed greatly assist in blocking drifting snow and that in fact the government was encouraging property owners with land along highways to plant trees as living snow fences.

The program is named (I am not making this up) "Break Wind – Make Money." My first thought was

that the minister was pulling my leg, or rather finger, but on reflection I hope it signals that we actually have some government officials with a sense of humour.

*Stuart Wright, Carrying Place, Ont.*

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