

OPINION

The Herald-Sun

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EDITORIALS

Daycare dollars and sense

Let's figure out the child care problem.

The Kellogg Foundation funded a 2004 report, "The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in North Carolina" that highlighted statistics that should make economic development leaders and business owners sit up and take notice.

In North Carolina, one in 10 workers has a child under the age of 6, and about a quarter of the unscheduled absences in every industry are related to child care needs.

Employee turnover costs about 1.5 times an employee's salary, but employees who receive child care benefits are half as likely to leave their jobs.

And child care is big business of its own, generating \$1.5 billion in North Carolina each year and providing more than 46,000 jobs.

Child care is a critical issue, not just for families, but communities and their economic well-being.

There is a particularly pervasive argument that suggests one parent should stay home to offset the spiraling cost of child care — which, because of regulations and operating costs, often exceeds the cost of undergraduate tuition at state universities.

Because it is often the mother who is encouraged or expected to stay home, child care has often been treated as a matter of choice, an expense and industry that serves middle income careerists.

That's a fallacy. For single and low-earning parents who cannot sacrifice income, child care is a necessity. Even in homes where a single parent's salary goes entirely or in large part to child care costs, the expense is offset by the need for parents to stay at work in order to remain employable and

increase their earnings over a lifetime — earnings that will be needed to pay for the college tuition on the other end of the spectrum.

Child care isn't a pink collar issue and it has to come off of the back burner for both the city and the state.

We can start in downtown Durham.

The city center has some limitations: For day cares to get a five-star rating, they need easily monitored play yards, for starters.

But the opportunities far outstrip the challenges.

Right now, about 14,000 people work in that part of town, a number that Downtown Durham Inc. and the city are working hard to increase. If one in 10 has a child under 6, that's a pool of 1,400 children, five times more than can be accommodated by the 274 slots available at the three area day care centers.

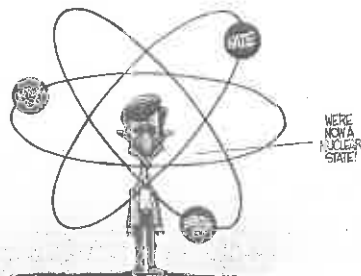
The business opportunity couldn't be more clear if it came with a carnival barker.

And, in fact, it does. The major players in downtown Durham — DDI and the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce — have teamed up with the Durham Partnership for Young Children to advocate for downtown child care.

Earlier this month, a survey of downtown workers showed that 75 percent of workers want childcare that's close to their offices, not close to their homes, and they would (at least hypothetically) pay more to access it. When you consider the fact that the average two-child family pays \$12,445 for child care each year, the financials start to make their own argument.

We urge the city planning department and council to work with economic stakeholders and make room for kids.

The IRANIAN REVOLUTION WAS 31 YEARS



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Substantial solutions

Attempted to digest J. Albright's letter of gripe, sniveling complaint and standard leftist "blame Bush" rhetoric over breakfast. Tough job! Almost lost it all! When my kids whimpered about one of life's frequent downers I called them "whineybutts," a term readily applicable to Albright.

A rebuttal: Wake up and smell the coffee, Albright! You describe Palin's bestseller as a hack job of blaming, others while the very essence of your letter is a combination of blaming and ridiculing other sincere Americans, even comparing them to the Klan. Shame on you!

It's time for non-party effort. Time to work together!

The Obama administration (with Congress) is now totally in charge of an agenda of continuous failure. The president, a quick study, should readily conclude that a charismatic personality is insufficient to heal America's present disease of wild spending, fiscal irresponsibility and growing government — all in leaps and bounds. Where are the adults?

Where are the solutions? Where are the ideas with real substance? Something all the people, including patriotic Tea Party Americans, can readily identify, understand and accept. Not some pie-in-the-sky misconception of a change-or-be-damned America. Obama's oratory skill alone can't pull it off. It will take real fiscal responsibility and a re-ap-

plication of formerly applied economic remedies that actually work. First order of presidential business: Do no harm! Second order: Place your trust in the people — not self-serving politicians. Let's get this ship under way before we all sink!

ERNE WENDEL
Durham

LETTERS POLICY

The Herald-Sun welcomes letters to the editor. Please limit letters to 250 words or fewer, and include your name, address and phone number. Letters are limited to one every calendar month, with right of reply. All letters are subject to editing. Letters represent the opinion of their writers. Send submissions to Letters to the Editor, The Herald-Sun, P.O. Box 2024, Durham, N.C. 27702; e-mail to letter@heraldsun.com or fax to 919-419-6888.

OTHER OPINIONS

The Dems' dependency agenda

The government dependency agenda is progressive education for children of all ages, meaning all ages treated as children.

Only two things are infinite — the expanding universe and Democrats' hostility to the District of Columbia's school choice program.

Killing this small program, which currently benefits 1,300 mostly poor and minority children, is odious and indicative. It is a small piece of something large — the Democrats' dependency agenda, which aims to multiply the ways Americans are dependent on government.

Democrats, in their canine devotion to teachers' unions, oppose empowering poor children to escape dependency on even terrible government schools. Unions and their poodles say school choice siphons money from public schools. But federal money funds D.C.'s program, so kill-

people who grow up assuming that dependency on government health care is normal.

Many Democrats favor — as Barack Obama did in 2003 — a "single-payer" health insurance system, which means universal dependency on government.

The "public option" insurance proposal was to be a step toward that. So was the proposed "alternative" of making 55- to 64-year-olds eligible for Medicare. Both of these dependency multipliers will be revived.

As will the Democrats' drive for "crashdown" legislation that would empower government (courts) in shared mortgage contracts, thereby making borrowers eager

to embrace dependency on collaborative governments that seize property from less wealthy people and transfer it to those wealthy interests who will pay more taxes to those governments.

Many Democrats, opposing the Supreme Court, advocate new campaign finance "reforms" that will further empower government to regulate the quantity, timing and content of speech about government. Otherwise voters will hear more such speech than government considers good for them. Such paternalism is American progressivism's oldest tradition.

A century ago, Herbert Croly published "The Promise of American Life," a book — still in print — that was a

