

## LETTERS

### A taxing time for Obama

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#### The math problem

In reference to the Chronicle headline on Wednesday's Page One, "Obama: 'I Screwed Up' on Two Appointees": Someone can't count. It seems that he screwed up on three appointees. Has anyone forgotten Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner? He also didn't pay his taxes but somehow managed to be confirmed.

Is Obama not checking these people out thoroughly before he nominates them, or does he believe that since he chose them, their transgressions don't matter? His appointment of former lobbyists after promising there would be none in his administration leads me to believe the latter. I hope this isn't an example of how he's going to run his administration.

**Bill Brant, Kingwood**

#### Change over years

Yes, President Obama "screwed up." But, he didn't shrink from taking "full responsibility," made no denials, excuses or rationalizations. That's quite a change from what we have gotten from the Oval Office during the past 12 years.

**Marty Adams, Houston**

#### One, and counting

Oh, my goodness, Barack Obama made a boo-boo. Now all the Democrats are yelling: "Everyone makes mistakes. At least he admitted it." What's the difference? A mistake is a mistake! Did you hear that, George W. Bush? That's one! Wait for more.

**Betty Clark, Houston**

#### Tax law is a slap

The multiple withdrawals of President Obama's nominations for Cabinet positions provide us all a valuable lesson. We have a tax system that is beyond comprehension.

If the best and brightest public servants that the new administration identifies as a first choice cannot navigate the tax code, where do the rest of us stand? Our tax system has outlived its usefulness.

If Timothy Geithner, Tom Daschle, et al, can only admit their shortcomings when exposed to public scrutiny, how should the rest of us feel about paying our taxes? It is a voluntary system, whereby the IRS generally accepts what we disclose. Is it OK that only the wealthiest can afford the best tax advice? Why do public servants continue to expect us all to pay up when they do not? It is the worst hypocrisy: Do as I say, not as I do.

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This is not a partisan appeal. Both parties play this game, and we all suffer. Our tax system is absurd. In fact, it is offensive. It is a slap in the face to the notion that we are all equal under the law. Yet we continue to endorse it with our votes, and we will continue to suffer it with our silence. Please get involved.

**Lane Garrison, Houston**

### What about . . . ?

How can people who are upset about Tom Daschle and Timothy Geithner not have a problem with corporations using tax schemes and off-book accounting?

**Paul H. Clark, Montgomery**

### Limit their power

Regarding Wednesday's Chronicle editorial "Daschle's difficulties": It is time that, as provided by the Constitution, at least two-thirds of state legislatures demand a constitutional convention to amend the Constitution to provide term limits for Congress.

If eight years is all any given president can hold the office, then why not six years for both the House and Senate? This amendment has to be forced at the state level, because Congress will never introduce such an amendment itself, let alone vote two-thirds in favor to present it to the states for ratification.

Current members of Con-gress and their

lobbyist pals will scream bloody murder, claiming that "experience is necessary to solve the country's problems." It was that same experience that gave us these problems and resulted in the bailouts for which there is no oversight. Members of both parties are responsible for this mess.

A regular schedule of getting rid of people in Wash-ington who are supposed to "serve the people" will reduce the power of lobbyists and will prevent lawmakers from getting drunk on power. Also, it will eliminate the laughable seniority system of selecting powerful committee chairs who are out of touch with this country.

**Chuck Hoffheiser, The Woodlands**

### Gratitude for free breakfast

Along with 2 million other Americans, I'd like to say a big "thank you" to Denny's restaurants. The free Gland Slam breakfast on Tuesday was a great token of appreciation in this tough economy. For many people, this might have been the best meal they will get all week. I saw a lot of smiles when I walked out the door.

**Randy Neumeier, Tomball<**

### Students are customers

Regarding Sunday's City and State cover article "Most on A&M faculty shun cash awards / Money tied to student rankings seen as offensive": In every human transaction, the person who receives a good or service and pays the bill for such is understood to be the customer. But in the

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article, Robert Kreiser of the American Association of University Professors tries to make the argument that our state universities are somehow exempt from that.

Students choose the school they will attend. Students select the field of study in which they'll major. Students (sometimes with help of their parents) pay the tuition and fees associated with their education. If that does not make them the customer of the university, then what exactly are they?

Kreiser's quote is useful to the extent that it pulls back the curtain on the mind-set of some tenured faculty members who dominate our universities' payroll. They believe that the universities exist to serve them. And too often they are right — to the detriment of students, parents and taxpayers.

The A&M faculty bonus program is the first of several measures designed to reorient our state's higher education institutions so that they are focused squarely on meeting the needs of students — their true customer.

**David Guenther, Texas Public Policy Foundation, Austin**

### Teen questions U.S. morals

Regarding Tuesday's Page One article "Adultery Web site's ad has critics calling foul": I am utterly disgusted that such a commercial is even an issue. Local television stations should be ashamed to have the audacity to air an ad that is

so perverse during the Super Bowl.

As a teenager, I have more than enough on my plate to worry about other than whether or not my parents could be one out of the 3.3 million members on the site. Users should be ashamed of the pain this could bring to so many people. What has happened to America's morals? So much for "till death do us part."

**Delaney Navarro, age 17, Klein Collins High School, Spring**

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