

Letters

Remember who paid for our freedom of speech

I have never done anything like this before, but after reading your article, "For youth, advice on military, and dissent" (Globe NorthWest, June 11), I felt compelled to write to you.

I first want to say that I am a mother of five children ranging from age 26 to 14, I currently live in Arlington, and, as I am sure you are aware, they have the biggest group that is protesting the war in Iraq.

There is only one part of your article that I do agree with, and that is if a teenager decides at 16 to sign up for the military and at age 18 they have changed their mind, they should be given the opportunity to get out of that contract. The military should not allow anyone under the age of 18 to sign a contract either with or without their parents' consent.

Now as for James Todd and the Merrimack Valley People for Peace, it seems that they have forgotten one important fact. If it was not for our fathers, grandfathers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters, they would have never had the opportunity to have freedom of speech.

Advice against military is misguided

It is people like your writer and James Todd ("For youth, advice on military, and dissent," Globe NorthWest, June 11) who diminish the greatness of the United States. We would be under the heel of an English king, or worse, we'd have a German boot on our neck if most Americans thought

I realize that it is very difficult for any parent to hear that their son or daughter wants to protect our country, as I am one of those parents. My son graduated from Arlington High School in June 2005. He tried the college route but it just wasn't for him. I am sure that many teenagers go through the same thing.

Well, my son decided that instead of having a dead-end life he would join the Marines. I must tell you I was a little nervous but, if this is what he truly wanted, then I would support him in any way he needed.

Trust me, no parent ever wants their child to take on a challenge that could take their life, but just think of how many other careers carry the same potential.

My son graduated from Parris Island on April 14 and I never knew the feeling of proud until I witnessed my son's graduation.

Now as for the statement that the military just tells you lies to get you to sign, I have found that to be totally false. Everything my son was promised has been fulfilled. I am sure that sometimes what a recruit is told isn't always what they

get, but situations do change. As you and Todd. Fools like you will awaken to the sound of an [improvised explosive device] on the Common and to the sounds of screaming wounded American citizens. The dead women and children won't be screaming.

WALTER PAZIK
San Francisco

Counter-recruiting story informed

Thanks and congratulations to Douglas Belkin for his well-written, informative article ("For youth, advice on military, and dissent," Globe NorthWest, June 11) about the recent counter-recruitment by the Merrimack Valley

People for Peace at the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School.

JANE CADAMITTE
Board member, Merrimack Valley People for Peace
North Andover

get, but situations do change.

If you look at what our society of youth has become, maybe more of these teenagers should be giving the military a chance. We have created a society of gang bangers, racists, spoiled brats, and teenagers with no respect. So when I saw my 18-year-old son and saw the respect he had for everyone he met, I knew he made the right choice.

So the next time that James Todd gets to use his freedom of speech, I hope he remembers that it was because of our military that he has that freedom. I commend

What do you think?

Do you think that people who are opposed to the war in Iraq should be allowed to counsel students at local high schools against enlisting in the military? Send e-mail to globenorthwest@globe.com or letters to Globe NorthWest, 442 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA 02421.

any person who takes on the challenge to join my son and his fellow Marines.

THERESA CARBETT
Arlington

State pays its share for special ed

In your article, "Group monitors special education system" (Globe NorthWest, June 4), you stated, "Special education, one of the most controversial and sensitive educational issues in the state, has always been a thorny matter for school districts facing constrained revenue sources and ballooning class sizes annually. Students with severe disabilities can sometimes cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, with districts receiving little or no compensation from the state."

Your statement is false and adds fuel to the already overwhelming misconception that special education is an unsupported, unworthy financial burden for the Massachusetts taxpayers to bear.

The Chapter 70 program is the major program of state aid to public elementary and secondary schools. In addition to providing state aid to support school operations, it also establishes minimum spending requirements for each school district and minimum requirements for each municipality's share of school costs.

In addition to the Chapter 70 program, school districts are eligi-

ble for reimbursement of special education expenses under the Circuit Breaker Program. In addition, during fiscal 2005, districts were allowed to claim for extraordinary relief if their eligible costs exceeded their fiscal 2004 eligible costs by 25 percent. Fifty-five districts claimed for relief, and 25 were determined eligible.

Children with special education needs live with the burden of a negative stigma associated with the cost of their education. Most people are unaware of the Circuit Breaker Program and assume, as you reported, that special education is little more than a huge financial drain on their town or city.

The high cost of special education also should serve as an indicator that districts need to make vast improvements in services and support for children with special education needs within neighborhood schools. The cost of special education will improve when districts commit to genuine inclusionary practices which promote acceptance, equity, collaboration, and embrace diversity.

JEANNE CAPPUCCIO
Chairwoman of Reading Parent Advisory Council for Special Education

Several factors in override resistance

Your article, "Fewer tax in- Security benefits. they are signifi-