

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ACA will affect small businesses

I've been in business for 35 years, and nowadays we're paying more taxes than ever. The Affordable Care Act has brought a new tax on health insurance companies that will disproportionately affect small businesses. Many larger companies will get around it since the increase will be seen on policies sold in the fully insured market, which are often purchased by companies unable to self-insure.

My brother and I have about a dozen employees for our three NAPA Auto Parts stores. We try to treat them well by providing benefits including health insurance. However, over the past few years, we cannot keep up with the costs. We do help our core set of employees with health insurance, and it's already a nightmare! We cannot raise the prices on our products by twenty percent in one year as insurance companies do because we would not be around long if we did.

Big corporations don't have the same connections with our communities as do small businesses. Blanchard is a nice place to raise children, but it's discouraging to see over-taxation threatening our livelihood. Thankfully, Congress has an opportunity to support local companies by enacting the Jobs and Premium Protection Act and repealing this tax.

— **Antione Treadaway**  
Shreveport

### Suggestion of racism in traffic stop was wrong

Re: "Mother shares tale of her day in Shreveport," March 16, 6D

On Sunday, March 16, a letter from Lauren Estep appeared on The Times opinion page detailing her encounter with a Caddo sheriff's deputy. In it, she questioned the reason why she was stopped by the deputy and implied that the deputy

had done something wrong or inappropriate by asking her "nationality" or race. She added in the letter that she was "scared" when an unmarked car with flashing emergency lights—a "drug interdiction car," in her opinion—and an SPD car also stopped. She questioned whether the reason she was stopped was because she and her child were not of the same race.

Each Caddo sheriff's patrol car is equipped with an in-car video/audio system that allows the sheriff's office to document traffic stops, both inside the patrol vehicle and while outside with the offender. A review of this tape showed that when she was first approached by the deputy Ms. Estep was specifically told that she was stopped for a seat belt violation. She was asked to confirm her race, because it is required on the ticket, which was completed in front of her. The "drug-interdiction" car was, in fact, our patrol commander, who had just left our Training Academy, saw the deputy on a traffic stop, and stopped to check on her. He was on the scene 80 seconds and never approached Ms. Estep's vehicle. No Shreveport police car was ever there.

Yes, Ms. Estep was polite to the deputy. And the deputy was polite to her. The deputy showed concern for her safety by instructing her that seat belts aren't effective if they aren't worn correctly and referenced her child in the back seat by kindly reminding her "You've got somebody to live for." Shame on Ms. Estep for making this about race or anything other than what it clearly was—a traffic stop for improper use of her seat belt.

— **Steve Prator**  
Caddo Parish sheriff, Shreveport

### Delegation should support Common Core

The Shreveport Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education

supports Common Core and urges our northwest Louisiana legislative delegation to support the Common Core initiatives underway in Louisiana and currently under review during this legislative session.

As representatives of the business community, we believe that adopting and implementing Common Core is a critical step toward ensuring that our K-12 schools are preparing the workforce Louisiana needs for the 21st Century. While local or state standards may have once been sufficient, all high performing countries in the world now recognize the importance of consistent, rigorous standards like the Common Core, and Louisiana should not turn back now.

As the businesses who support our schools today, and who will hire our graduates tomorrow, we implore our legislators to remain steadfast in supporting Common Core as the right standards for our time.

— **Rich DesCoteaux**  
chairman, Shreveport Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education

### ID tags, microchips save pets lives

ID tags are still necessary to save your pet's life, even if he has a microchip. When Joe Smith finds your lost pet, he has no way of knowing that this animal has a microchip, as they are invisible.

Without an ID tag, and without someone going to the trouble of taking your pet to a veterinary clinic or shelter to detect if there is a microchip or not, your pet could wind up classified as a stray, with limited days allowed in an animal shelter. Make sure your pet is wearing a collar, rabies tag and ID tag, as well as having been microchipped, and he/she will have the best chance of going home as soon as possible. Please be a responsible petowner.

— **Rosana S. Bruner**  
Shreveport