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Readers write (April 14): The president, the governor, racial disparities, military intervention

Updated: April 13, 2011 - 9:02 PM

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REPRESENTATION

A broad responsibility, not a victory lap

I am amazed by and truly concerned about how far newly elected legislators are willing to go to push through their agendas. They were not elected by everyone, and not all of us agree with what is being presented as "necessary."

I am tired of the "this is what the people told us" routine. They can spin it any way they want, but they were not elected to undo anything and everything that was previously done -- to set abortion availability back to the dark ages, to run down reserves, to take away necessary programs and their funding, to promote corporate greed, or to infringe on basic services to those who need them the most.

They were elected to move forward and find creative and positive ways to balance budgets and run our state. I can only hope that these elitists and wealth-mongers don't ever need the services they would now deny. What goes around comes around. I'm just sayin'.

BARB CARLSON, SHOREVIEW

...

Two Star Tribune stories ("[Irking friends and embracing foes](#)" and "[Obama to offer his plan today](#)," April 13) reported that some of the Democratic base is angered with Gov. Mark Dayton and President Obama.

Many Democrats shared their deep disappointment with both men, who appear to be abandoning core principles of their party platform. I also received e-mails from the liberal groups Bold Progressives and [MoveOn.org](#) that expressed similar sentiments.

I, too, am deeply disappointed. Not with Dayton and Obama, but with these whiny, short-sighted progressive voters.

Dayton and Obama promised to represent the entire state and country, respectively. And both are capably doing that very thing. My biggest complaint with any politician (from any party) is when they become a branch office of their party instead of respectfully representing the politically diverse voices of their constituents.

To Bold Progressives, [MoveOn.org](#) and my other fellow Democrats, you have two simple choices: Either enthusiastically support your intelligent, forward-thinking and inclusive Democratic governor and

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president, or expect regressive, corporate-bought Tea Party candidates to take their places down the road.

STEVE MARK, MINNETONKA

* * *

RACIAL DISPARITIES **Applause for Dayton, but a task for us all**

Gov. Mark Dayton's recent visit to the North Side of Minneapolis and his timely response to the issues raised there provide promise that he will be a man of his word in mitigating our state's massive racial disparities in economic well-being.

When asked who was accountable to correct the disparities, he replied, "I am."

While we applaud his resolve, we would argue that we all have a responsibility to curb the inequities.

As news reports remind us that black people in our state are experiencing unemployment levels more than three times higher than white people, the Legislature is proposing budget cuts from health care to public safety, which will hit people of color particularly hard.

One proposal that seems especially out of touch is budget cuts of 65 percent to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, the state agency charged with eliminating discrimination in the workplace.

Not satisfied with just slashing the budget, the House also has proposed overhauling the department's mission, eliminating its important compliance monitoring and antidiscrimination education work.

On another front, the Legislature is attempting to repeal a law that requires local governments to prove that they are fairly compensating female employees.

This while women in Minnesota continue to earn less than their male counterparts -- 23 cents less per dollar, to be exact.

Break that statistic down by race and ethnicity, and the numbers are even more disturbing -- Asian women earn 30 cents less; black women earn 37 cents less, and Hispanic women earn 54 cents less than men.

Clearly, the governor has his work cut out for him. The good news is that a conversation has been started.

LOUIS KING AND MAURA BROWN, MINNEAPOLIS

The writers are CEO of Summit Academy OIC and associate director of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, respectively. They work together in the HIRE Minnesota coalition.

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MILITARY INTERVENTION **Sorry -- it's always a matter of self-interest**

France's long history of intervention in Africa proves the adage that countries, like people, can generally be depended upon to act in their own interests. French military action to protect its oil and other business interests in both the Ivory Coast and Libya is the latest example.

It is therefore surprising that the Star Tribune grants France a fig leaf for its latest round of self-aggrandizing interventions ([editorial, April 13](#)).



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This fig leaf is provided by the "right to protect" doctrine, cooked up by liberal internationalists in the Obama administration to avoid having to explain how their own actions in Libya are even remotely related to America's national interest.

PETER D. ABARBANEL, APPLE VALLEY

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