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# WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 1982

## Letters to the Editor

### *Can Congress Staunch Red-Ink Flow?*

I read with interest your March 8 editorial "Deficit Hypocrisy." I take exception to your views not so much because of your attempt to somehow blame Congress for the \$91.5 billion deficit proposed by the President (which, according to the Congressional Budget Office, may be closer to \$121 billion), but rather because your examples of alleged congressional disregard for the size of the deficit were either irrelevant, misleading or wrong.

Your example of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee action on the fiscal 1983 Department of Energy authorization is very misleading. Since this is an authorization, not an appropriation, Sen. McClure's committee did not preclude spending cuts. What they opted for was to freeze spending ceilings at their fiscal 1982 level, an action totally consistent with Budget Chairman Domenici's comprehensive proposal to reduce the deficit by more than \$300 billion over the next three years.

The outrage expressed by members of the House Education and Labor Committee over cuts in student loan funding, while understandable, is a question of priority, if offsetting cuts are found; your assumption that they would not be found is speculation.

A good place to look for funds to offset student loan cuts would be the cost over-

runs on the Army's UH 60A helicopter program which could restore the \$3 billion cut from the student loan program and use the \$1.7 billion left over to reduce the deficit.

Finally, your example of the action taken by the House Agriculture Committee regarding commodity price supports is in error. While acknowledging that "in a sense this was foreordained by the farm bill Congress passed and the President signed in December," you neglected to mention the action was required because the 20% reduction originally requested was based on 1981 crop estimates and does not reflect the crop estimate revisions made in the February 1982 Department of Agriculture World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimates. Thus, the administration has recognized its own mistake and has agreed to the budget revision.

And I believe you are wrong on one final count. What you cynically cite as "vote buying" from farmers and parents of college students is, for this member, my way of saying I will choose programs for farmers over outrageous tax credit leasing schemes and college students over billion-dollar cost overruns on weapons systems.

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House of Representatives

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