

OPINION

OUR VIEW

TAA is the first step

Kudos to all involved in securing the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance program for eligible workers whose jobs will be terminated by October at the Boise Inc. paper mill in International Falls.

The program will assist the workers who meet certain criteria with a variety of benefits, including training and their search for reemployment.

It appears that our federal leaders — Congressman Rick Nolan and Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken — deserve a pat on the back for helping, along with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development’s petition, to convince the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance that the loss of the 265 jobs at the local mill is a result of direct competition with nations that subsidize their paper industry.

The idea that our paper mill faces unfair competition with other nations is not new to Borderland. Local elected and union leaders have asked that

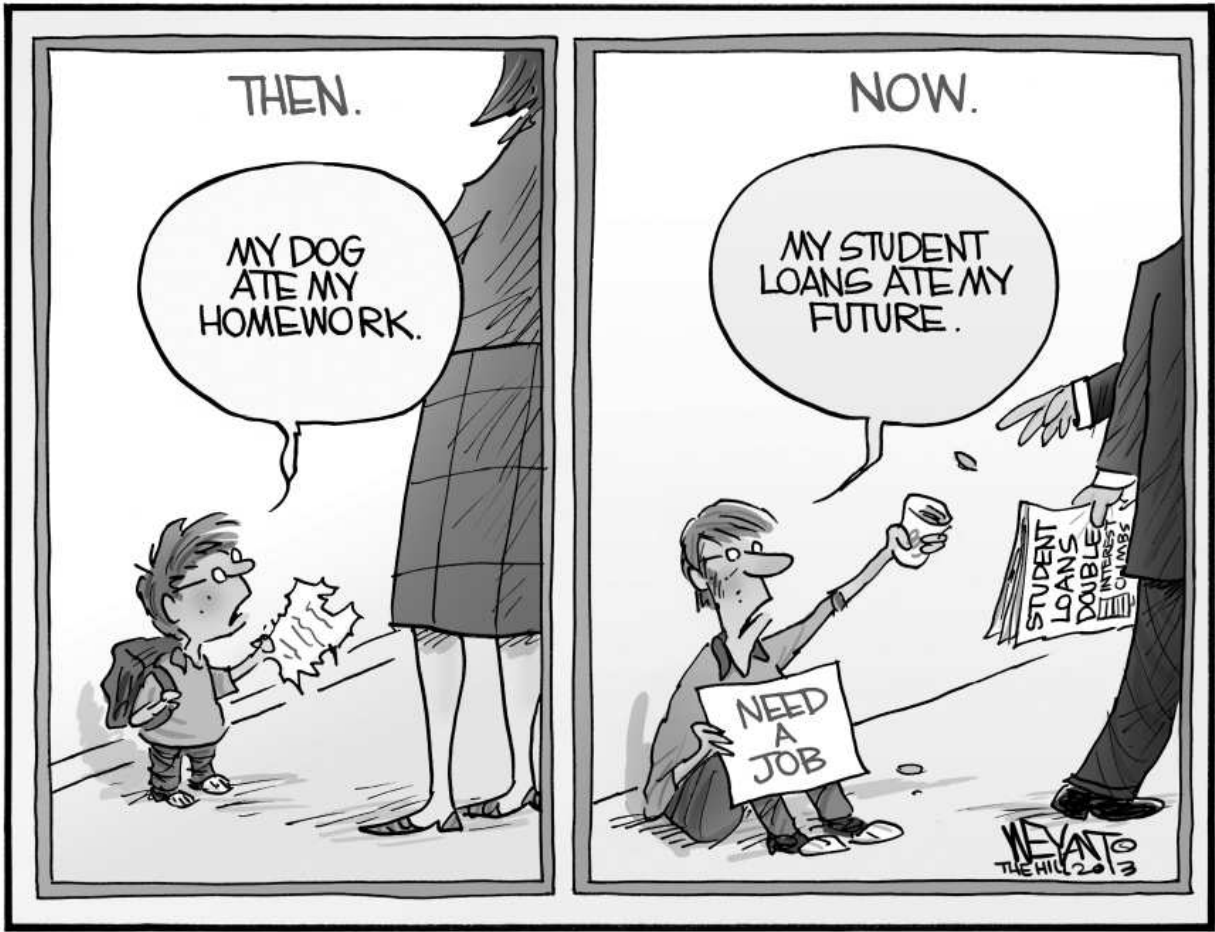
federal leaders push for fair trade, not free trade.

Sen. Al Franken, in his letter to the Department of Labor, said that the trade effect on the paper industry in Minnesota has been dramatic and sustained within the last year and a half.

And Congressman Rick Nolan said designating the job curtailment at the paper mill for TAA confirms “that these Boise workers are indeed victims of unfair trade by foreign competitors subsidized by their governments.”

Both leaders said that TAA program will assist the community, but it is the first step in helping the nation’s labor force.

They recognize there is a larger issue and a next step that must be considered: Reform of the country’s trade laws is needed to protect American jobs. We urge them to move forward with these needed measures to ensure that the remaining 580 jobs at the paper mill here and in other places are not jeopardized by unfair competition.



GUEST COLUMN

Drugs in our schools

It’s no surprise that there are drugs in schools. Kids are using drugs everywhere, right? Our school is no different from the rest of the nation, but does that mean that we should just ignore the problem? Are drug dogs really the solution? The only thing that it does is force the student to buy more of whatever he or she was caught with. I think that we should continue drug education in high school.

Is it a teacher’s responsibility to educate kids on drug abuse? I think that it is their duty to take action if they know for a fact that a student uses drugs. Faculty is required to discipline a student if he or she is caught with drugs on school property. Why can’t it be required that they talk with a student if he or she is talking about their drug abuse in class? I can think of several times when a student has shouted out that they got high the weekend before, or talk in front of a teacher about their recent hallucinations or which brand of beer they like the best.

The way that teens view drugs is the biggest problem. Media has glamorized the use of marijuana and alcohol. Most of kids’ first impression with drugs is that they can make you happy, and it’s cool to



Eric
MATHIEWS
INTERN

abuse them along with your friends.

The most responsible adult has ever told me is that drugs are bad, and to not do drugs because they’re bad. No one ever told me why. I had to make the decision not to abuse drugs on my own. Some of my classmates didn’t make that decision. I know that about 10 of my classmates use drugs for sure, and there are probably around the same number who do, that I don’t know about. About half of my class drinks alcohol, or has gotten drunk at least once. Some of them are just turning 16. I’m worried to see what kind of drivers they become.

Discipline is not enough. Just telling a teenager not to do something because they shouldn’t does not work. You need to show them why they

shouldn’t do it, and how it can hurt the people around them. For example, last year’s homecoming dance at Falls High School, some kids showed up drunk. After the police showed up, even more teens ran away scared because what they were also doing that night might get them in trouble. Only half of those who initially showed up returned to the dance floor after the incident. If the kids were educated on why they should not be drinking, I believe that the same people wouldn’t have made the decision to do so.

The following week after the dance, kids took to Twitter to voice their outrage. Those who had gotten drunk were scolded for “ruining the fun” not because what they did halted the night’s event, but because they had gotten people who usually drink, but didn’t get drunk, arrested. Is that really the response teens should have? Shouldn’t they be upset because they got drunk, and not because their actions got kids who usually get away free, get caught?

I think that if the school puts a few of these ideas into action, we would all see a dramatic change in how students behave, and what kind of adults they are sending out into the world.

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