

How to build wages and opportunity

Editor — The article by Vanessa Hua highlighting new workforce data (“Education, race drive incomes,” April 6) reinforces the fear we all have that San Francisco is moving further toward becoming a city of haves and have-nots.

As your report highlights, college graduates earn four times the amount of workers without high school diplomas. This discrepancy makes it difficult for many workers and their families to survive in the city, despite often working punishing hours in multiple jobs.

Mayor Gavin Newsom is right that part of the solution is training programs that can transition lower-wage workers into better-paid fields.

Also important are efforts to connect low-wage workers to programs, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and food stamps, which subsidize their wages until they are able to develop the skills necessary to become self-sufficient.

The city has set an admirable example with its trailblazing working-families tax credit.

Businesses can play a role, too. They should educate employees about the benefits they are eligible for and help them access them. They should also invest in the ongoing skills development of their employees.

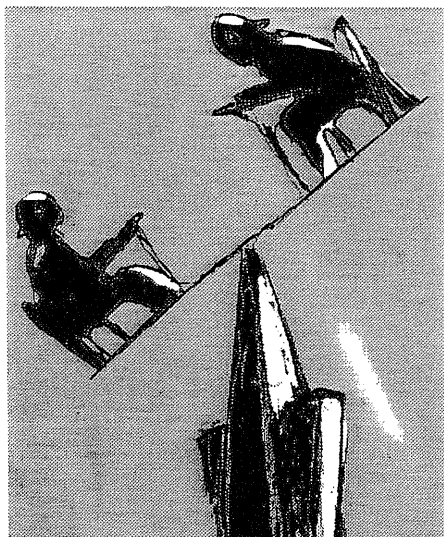
The future competitiveness of San Francisco depends on all of us pitching in to maintain the productivity, diversity and vitality of our workforce.

TERRI FEELY
Executive Director
SFWorks
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What are we afraid of?

Editor — It is interesting that the United States has decided not to run for a seat on the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Could it be that the Bush administration, which has condoned and practiced torture, has launched two pre-emptive wars that have killed tens of thousands,



LANCE JACKSON / *The Chronicle*

spies on its own citizens, and generally denies its continued war crimes and other crimes against humanity, recognizes that sitting on such a body would be hypocritical?

Oh, I forgot. This is the Bush regime, where hypocrisy is a virtue. The council was created on a U.N. General Assembly vote of 170 to 4. The United States and Israel were 2 of the 4 “no” votes.

It makes sense that the Bush administration would be opposed to any international body that could possibly condemn the regime’s consistent violation of human rights both here and abroad.

KENNETH J. THEISEN
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‘Green’ chemistry?

Editor — Contrary to your portrayal of the American Chemistry Council (ACC) in your editorial, “Green chemistry for California,” ACC voiced concerns about the UC Berkeley report because we believe public interest is best served by a fair presentation of all the facts, which the Berkeley report failed to provide.

First, we welcome discussions on

chemical-policy issues described in the Berkeley report. And, we stand by our position that the report has several critical shortcomings. The federal and state regulatory systems and laws provide a sound and appropriate basis for ensuring the safe manufacture and use of chemicals in California.

Second, the chemistry business takes great pride in its green-chemistry accomplishments, particularly its participation and success in winning the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the American Chemical Society. ACC members have won awards in nine of the past 10 years. Third, the editorial notes “extremely promising” proposed legislation in Europe. In reality, EU’s REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorization Restrictions of Chemicals) proposal is an unproven and untested regulatory system. The assumption that it would benefit California is mere speculation: More than 30 World Trade Organization governments have expressed concern about its trade and competitive impacts.

The chemistry industry works hand-in-hand with government and scientists to increase knowledge about the safety of our products. The residents of California are living longer and healthier lives through the essential benefits provided by the chemistry industry.

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One busy hospital

Editor — It is regrettable that Jim Doyle’s April 3 article, “Battle rages over hospital measure,” so faithfully parrots the absurd argument put forth by opponents of Measure C that Sonoma Valley Hospital is “underutilized.”

The truth is that the hospital is very busy, with roughly 400 patients being seen daily for lab work, imaging or sur-