

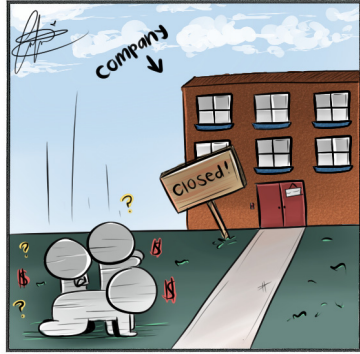
Government Resumes From Pointless Shutdown

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On Oct. 1, 2013, the federal government entered a shutdown due to failure to approve a budget plan for the 2014 fiscal year. A “funding gap” was the result of Congress’ inability to reach a solution for the budget plan: the Republican-led House of Representatives proposed defunding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, but was challenged by the Democratic-led Senate, which is in favor of funding Obamacare. As a result of this inability to compromise, the government shut down for 16 days until Oct. 17, when the debt ceiling was suspended to Feb. 7, 2014 by President Barack Obama.

Though it is now over, the government shutdown left many programs that provide basic necessities to those with low incomes in a panic. Government programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

Program, also known as Food Stamps or SNAP, were only funded until the end of October, which caused many to realize that if the government shutdown went past the end of October, there would be no funding to assist low-income households. These programs exist as a way to help unfortunate Americans survive with basic essentials and, in many cases, provide for their families; therefore, they are programs that should always be far from being in danger of funding cuts. For example, around 47 million Americans are on the Food Stamps program, nearly half of whom are children or teenagers, meaning that the government nearly risked the well-being



of millions of minors. Yet the government shutdown caused a completely unnecessary panic, given that the end result was not so much a “bi-partisan negotiation,” as Speaker of the House John Boehner calls it, but rather a cornering tactic.

What Boehner does not seem to realize is that the House essentially called for Obamacare to be defunded, which is hardly a compromise between the two political parties.

His main reasons for not wanting to fund Obamacare were that it would “raise taxes again on the American people and undo the spending caps [...] without replacing them with better spending cuts.” However, the move to raise taxes and fund Obamacare has been supported by many of the American people, as found in a study conducted by the Wall Street Journal. Furthermore, Obamacare is a utilitarian move for our country, meaning that it is practical for the majority of people in a society. By promoting

affordable health care, American suffering can be minimized. Ultimately, the happiness and well-being of the American people should be the first priority when it comes to the government deciding what to do about America’s future. Though Boehner’s reasoning has truth, the benefits of Obamacare outweigh what will have to change for it to take action.

The House’s facade of a compromise was merely a ploy made in an attempt to repeal or at least lessen the effects of Obamacare. A group of mature men and women literally shut the government down, leaving many government workers out of jobs and low-income households to fend for themselves just because they wanted to repeal Obamacare and deny many Americans of affordable healthcare.

Despite this, Obamacare is funded by spending what was authorized prior to the lift of the shutdown, meaning that the changes made to the debt ceiling in the Continuing Appropriations Act do not affect it. Essentially, the shutdown can be deemed pointless.



Write or
Wong?

Being a Teen in the
Eyes of Adults

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When you think of the word “teenager,” what words come to mind? To adults these days, the first thoughts would be negative, characterizing teens as wild, irresponsible and immature. While these complaints about future generations are prominent among our predecessors and nothing new, this intensity of doubt and concern has now grown into stereotypical “you’re just a teenager” generalizations.

While advertisement searching for The Moor Weekly, I presented myself to dozens of managers and cashiers. After a while, I noticed their disinterest, because I was merely a high school student. Yes, it could be that my sales pitch was not appealing or perhaps they really did not need advertising, but if I were an adult instead of a teenager, how would their perception of me change? To them, I was just a random teenager doing business with them.

Adults are not all like this, but in the bigger picture, being an adolescent today is labeled more and more with the words untrustworthy and childish. To our parents, our rebellious ways, impatient tone and eye rolling get old, but these actions should our only characterization. It is unfair that a first impression is based on biased teenage generalizations; we should be given the benefit of doubt regardless of our age.

Are we to blame generalizations on the fact that we aren’t given a chance, or have we failed adults’ expectations? Nonetheless, we still have the power to make what is believed of us inconsequential and unreliable judgement. Our behavior comes hand-in-hand with our growing up; negative perceptions and antagonism toward us as teenagers should not.

MOOR graphics by SIMON ZHAO

Augmenting Minimum Wage to Narrow the Gap Between Classes

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On July 26, 2012, Senator Tom Harkin introduced the Fair Minimum Wage Act in Congress to raise our current minimum wage, from \$7.25 an hour to \$9.80 an hour. According to Time for Raise, a project which promotes the needs of the citizen-consumer, 28 million people are currently working at minimum wage across the U.S., and a full-time worker only makes \$15,080 a year on minimum wage. This higher income can also foster greater consumer spending, which helps the economy. Therefore, increasing the minimum wage will benefit

workers and the economy as well.

If the minimum wage were to be raised, more workers and their families would have the opportunity to get out of debt and poverty. The current minimum wage is not enough for necessities such as food, housing and health care. According to Learn Vest, a financial planning site, if a full-time worker is supporting a family of four on minimum wage, that family would be \$7,000 below the poverty line.

Since workers would receive a higher income, they will have the luxury to purchase more things, which results in more consumer spending, significantly benefiting the economy.

A 2011 study by the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank revealed that every time a dollar is added to the hourly minimum wage, it results in an additional \$2,800 yearly consumer spending for a worker’s household.

However, some economists have argue that by raising the minimum wage, it could lead to fewer job opportunities for young people. According to Forbes, within six months of the last minimum wage increase in 2009, 600,000 teens’ jobs disappeared.

If the Fair Minimum Wage Act were to pass, it may mean that companies will have to pay their lower wage employees more, but it does not mean that they will

have to hire fewer workers; companies can raise prices in response.

For instance, according to the Washington Post, fast food restaurants just raise prices to their food items when wages are raised. Therefore, if the Fair Minimum Wage Act were to pass, it may not necessarily affect unemployment.

Raising the minimum wage significantly helps stimulate our economy as well as the workers. It gives workers and their families the chance to get out of debt and poverty as well as increasing consumer spending. Our economy is slowly recovering; however, to make things more efficient, the minimum wage should be raised.

New Regulations Collectively Limit Harmful Substances

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It’s no surprise that products such as nail polish and water bottles contain varying amounts of toxic substances. The chemicals are harmful, yet consumers are still continually exposed to them in varying amounts. In response, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control has developed a more methodical and efficient approach in limiting the usage of potentially harmful substances in everyday products.

The previous method in limiting toxic substances was to ban a single chemical from similar products. Bisphenol-A (BPA), a compound found in coatings and plastics, was banned from baby bottles when research revealed potentially negative side effects with consumption. In terms of limiting exposure to harmful chemicals, the method was too segmented to be effective because the chemical could be banned from one type of product but could be used in another type, exposing another demographic to harmful sub-

stances. As a result, the previous method resulted in wasted effort and time for virtually no effect.

Effective Oct. 1, the state will now have to categorize potentially harmful products into different groups and analyze the toxic substances in the products to see whether the chemicals are needed in the product and whether there are safer alternatives. The new method works toward eliminating unnecessary contact with dangerous chemicals by pushing companies to question the usage of certain chemicals and requiring them to find the safest substance to use. Producers must provide evidence of their tests, serving somewhat as a checks and balance with consumer health and profit. The rate of cancer incidences in the US has risen significantly, so every chance to avoid potential carcinogens is a must if cancer rates are to be reduced.

It is up to the state to make sure the laws are implemented effectively, since citizens’ health relies on the laws. However, a step toward efficiency is still progress.

