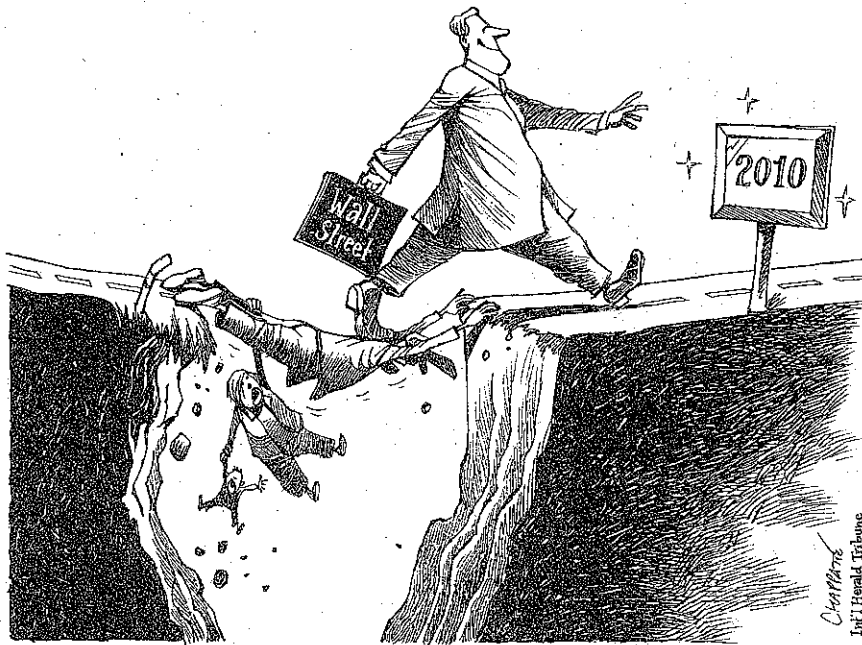


# OPINION

## FIRST AMENDMENT

“Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech or the press ...”



## Letters to the Editor

### Stalking is a crime of violence

To the Editor:

January is National Stalking Awareness Month, a time to raise the public consciousness of this insidious and dangerous crime that affects 3.4 million victims each year. This year's theme — "Stalking: Know It. Name It. Stop It" — challenges us to fight this crime by learning more about it and discussing it in our communities, schools, workplaces and homes.

Although stalking is a crime in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, many victims and criminal justice professionals underestimate its seriousness and impact. For many people, stalking doesn't seem like a crime of violence. That is, until it happens to you or to someone you care about. When the places that always made you feel safe are compromised — your own home, your office, the streets of your neighborhood — "violence" no longer seems an inappropriate term to describe your fears and overwhelming vulnerability. In one of five cases, stalkers use weapons to harm or threaten victims, and stalking is one of the significant risk factors for homicide of women in abusive relationships. Stalking is also difficult to recognize, investigate and prosecute.

However, studies demonstrate that those communities

We at the Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA) urge you to educate yourselves about stalking and how you might be able to make a difference in your community. The Stalking Resources Center of the National Center for Victims of Crime has joined with the Office on Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice to develop a Web site, [stalkingawarenessmonth.org](http://stalkingawarenessmonth.org), that offers a variety of resources to inspire and assist you during Stalking Awareness Month in January and throughout the year.

*Barbara Clark  
Executive director  
Network of Victim Assistance  
Jamison*

*Editor's Note: Network of Victim Assistance supports, counsels and empowers victims of sexual assault and other serious crimes. For more information, go to [www.NOVA Bucks.org](http://www.NOVA Bucks.org).*

### This health bill is the wrong one

To the Editor:

This letter is directed to those who voted for Patrick Murphy and President Obama in 2008. We are on the brink of

getting a health care bill passed that will cost \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion. We will not see any benefits (if there are any) for three years. Nebraska, Florida and Louisiana (What were our two senators thinking?) get special benefits, and there could be more hidden in that humongous bill. How come we get to see just one hour of controlled debate on C-SPAN? Is this an example of transparency in government that was promised during the Obama campaign?

Was the passing of the stimulus bill fiscally responsible when you consider unemployment is anywhere from 12 percent to 15 percent? We needed to be fiscally responsible and not wait until next year, as the president said. This is next year, and what does he have on his agenda? Health care and another "jobs" bill.

As a lifelong Democrat, I believe we need to vote Patrick Murphy out, as well as our current senators, who can't fight for Pennsylvanians or Americans and who voted for a bill that gives special deals to other states.

We don't need this health care bill, which is full of special interest "pork." We need real health care reform.

*Raymond Escardille  
Warminster Township*

### Reid says what blacks know

To the Editor:

As an African-American growing up in the Jim Crow 1950s-60s, I recall an old expression commonly shared among blacks in both the North and the South. The expression was, "If you're white, all right. If you're black, step back." The expression was used to describe the view that the best opportunities were unequally given to whites or light-skinned blacks, rather than their darker-skinned counterparts.

Civil rights laws eliminated much of the structural bias fueling this belief. However, many blacks and whites still believe such cultural bias exists.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid appears to believe that such a bias still exists. He feels that Obama's light skin and ability to talk in a "non-Negro dialect" was a political advantage. This does not make the senator a racist and a bigot. Although his use of the term "Negro dialect" makes me cringe, I'm sure saying "he talks white" wouldn't have made it much better.

The senator's choices of words were poor, but they do not make him a racist. What is

The newspaper welcomes letters. Address them to "Your Turn," The Intelligencer, 333 N. Broad St.