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LETTERS

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Apathy deadly to democracy

Gov. Brad Henry must insist that Oklahoma's voting machines have a paper trail that can be recounted. After the fiasco of the last presidential election, America should take every single precaution available to make sure that our next election is as fair and accurate as possible.

If Americans begin to believe that our elections are flawed, then our representative government is at risk; and apathy — which is deadly to democracy — will grow.

Worth Clinkscales, Tulsa

Corrective measures

In his latest attack on the Democrats' nominee for president, George Bush accuses Sen. John Kerry of flip-flopping on NAFTA, the Patriot Act, No Child Left Behind and the war in Iraq.

This charge by the president and his cronies, while intended to besmirch the image of Kerry, in reality paints a picture of man who is not afraid to admit that he may have made a mistake when he originally voted for these things and is now willing to do something about it, which is something the president seems to be incapable of, or is unwilling to do.

Although Kerry may indeed have voted for these issues initially, now, after carefully evaluating the effects this legislation is having upon the country — or that it is *not* having — he has reversed his position on these issues. This is exactly the kind of leadership this country needs!

Unfortunately, this type of mid-course correction is something the current president and other Republicans neither understand nor will ever do; because before they would ever admit to possibly having made a mistake and then trying to correct it, they would rather let the country go down in flames!

Ginny Webster, Broken Arrow

More than qualified

I am the father of the optometrist you referred to in your March 10 editorial, "Eye surgery," concerning legislation introduced by Rep. John Sullivan to limit "eye surgery" to medical doctors. The matter needs some clarification.

The very minor surgeries that are being performed by Veterans Administration optometrists do not compare to those performed by ophthalmologists. Optometrists do not perform the type of surgery that people associate with "laser" surgery, like lasik or other vision-correction surgery.

The education and training that Oklahoma optometrists obtain at Northeastern State University at Tahlequah, where my daughter received her degree, more than qualify them to perform the surgeries that they do. As I suggested to Sullivan, you should visit the universi-

ty and see firsthand the type of surgeries being done.

As an Oklahoman, I would think that Sullivan would be proud of what the optometrists licensed in Oklahoma can do, regardless of other states. And, I seriously doubt there has been an outcry from veterans about this issue, especially those veterans who have received treatment from Oklahoma licensed VA optometrists. The alternative is referrals to doctors outside the VA system at additional taxpayer expense and usually several months of waiting.

Your editorial noted that the Oklahoma Legislature passed the law that allows optometrists to perform these surgeries because of a superior lobby by optometrists. I would suggest that Sullivan's bill is being undertaken because of superior lobbying by the medical associations. By the way, I am a constituent of Sullivan's. I sent a letter similar to this to him, with a copy to all other members of the Oklahoma delegation in Washington. I have not heard from Sullivan but have heard from both of our senators and Rep. Carson. None of them committed to support or opposition, but at least I heard from them.

Mike Call, Broken Arrow

Good companies do good

Everyone deserves a little pat on the back now and then. That's why we'd like to publicly thank Arby's and Wal-Mart for their kindness.

We are a small "band of brothers" who attend church together in Broken Arrow, work together in downtown Tulsa and share a mutual calling to help lift up the less fortunate.

We are starting a new charity for the hungry, the homeless, the hurting and those who need healing. Since October we've been hitting the streets about once a week to provide modest means for serious needs. We've found people under bridges, in alleys and along the banks of the Arkansas River. People who need hope aren't hard to find. They're everywhere.

Arby's and Wal-Mart have been there right alongside us. Arby's has been gracious to provide sandwiches; Wal-Mart has been kind to provide clothing.

We don't have our 501(c)(3) tax status yet. We don't even have an office. We simply explained our vision to these companies and they took us at our word. They may never know how much they've helped, but God knows. The Bible says that "God remembers your gifts to the poor."

We remember, too, and we say "thank you."

Kelly Swan, Tulsa

This letter was also signed by Erin Bjornberg and Chris Brooks.

Letters to the editor are encouraged. Each letter must be signed and include an address and a telephone number where the writer can be reached during business hours. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Letters should be a maximum of 200 words to be considered for publication and may be edited for length, style and grammar.