

Letters From The People

To The Editor Of The Bee

Duke's Record

We take exception to the statement printed in your paper on Aug. 26 by Steve Merksamer, chief of staff of Gov. Deukmejian, who criticized your paper for failing to report "that Gov. Deukmejian's budget will provide 700,000 elderly, blind and disabled Californians with an average 4 percent increase in their benefits; 1.6 million recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children will also get a 4 percent increase."

The major misrepresentation by Mr. Merksamer is that these increases are a part of the governor's budget. They were not. The governor's budget in January 1983 proposed to eliminate the lawfully required increases for the needy aged, blind, disabled and children, and also to eliminate the law on the books for which he — Deukmejian — voted when he was a senator, so the governor could blue-pencil these increases at his pleasure.

This callous proposal of the governor was rejected by the Democrats in the Legislature and Republicans voted against increases for the needy during the deliberations of the budget.

Thus, a person reading Mr. Merksamer's article may label the Deukmejian administration a compassionate and caring administration, which is far from the truth evinced by his reduction of \$14 million in the AFDC program for destitute children applying for aid for the first time.

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