

# POINT OF VIEW

## Our View

### Pugilist OK'd to fight for life

The boxing world on Monday breathed a sigh of relief. Or was that a wince? Depends on which side of the Mike Tyson debate you're on.

The Nevada Athletic Commission, which verbally jabbed the former heavyweight boxing champ for twice biting Evander Holyfield's ears during a title fight last year, voted 4-1 on Monday to give boxing's biggest meal ticket a second chance.

Commissioners were satisfied with results of psychological tests by a "brain team" from Massachusetts General Studies — neurologists said Tyson was fit to fight — and gave Tyson the benefit of the doubt regarding his conduct in an Aug. 31 traffic accident in Gaithersburg, Md. Tyson is alleged to have punched one motorist and kicked the other in the groin.

Tyson is scheduled to appear in court Dec. 1. If he's found guilty, Monday's ruling could be moot — he could be accused of violating parole and be sent back to Indiana where he spent three years in prison on a rape conviction.

Should charges be dropped, the 32-year-old Tyson faces an equally perilous task: Racing time to top off what was once boxing's most promising career, resurrecting what's left of his public image, rebuilding his shattered finances — he's said to owe \$18 million in taxes — regaining the championship and repairing his life.

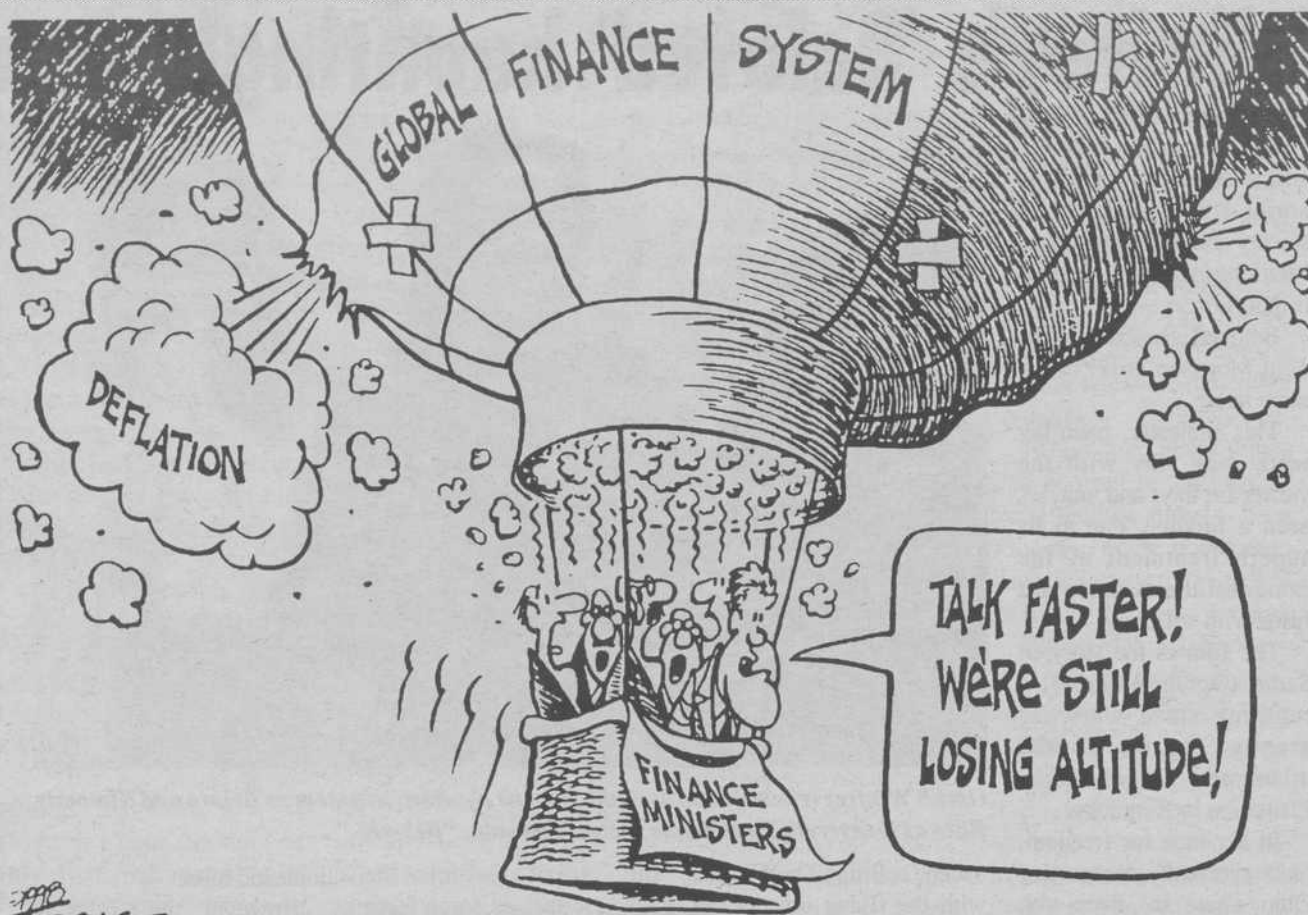
Tyson's return bodes well for Vegas' bottom line. His fights are events, much as Muhammad Ali's were — the boxing legend is one of several prominent people hoping to right Tyson's wavering ship. Tyson's return also bodes well for the man himself. He's fought all his life. Now he's fighting to have a life. We wish him luck.

### Series drives home need to vote

PBS, this week, aired a series titled "Africans in America." This was must-see television. Brought to life in the week-long series were heart-wrenching stories of the inhuman treatment Africans were subjected to as they shipped by the millions to a new home thousands of miles away in a foreign land.

Africans were stacked like firewood on ships sailing toward America. Given little food or water, many starved. Many perished by communicable disease contracted via unsanitary conditions. Many committed suicide, jumping into the ocean. Some died in mutinous revolts. Things got worse in America. Reduced to property and counted as 3/5 of a person, Africans were sold into chattel slavery.

Though the freeing and patriation of slaves has long past, Blacks need to recall what our ancestors went through to give us a voice. To ensure we keep that voice and strengthen it, several things must be done. Primary among them is voting. If you don't have a vote, you don't have a voice. It's that simple. Get out and vote.



## Public must sound off on need for child care

By Marian Wright Edelman

Special to Sentinel-Voice

You wouldn't leave your house without ensuring that your child care needs are satisfied, would you? Well, we need to make sure that Congress doesn't leave the House of Representatives and the Senate without making sure America's child care needs are satisfied.

This is an election year. Congress will be coming back to Washington after the summer recess, but they'll be focused on adjourning early and getting back to their states as quickly as possible to campaign for re-election. They need to hear our voices. They need to know that we don't want to see them back home until they've taken care of important business for children and working parents.

Spread the word in your community: We're asking all children's programs, day care homes and centers, summer camps, libraries, religious congregations, community centers and children's advocates to create handbanners, posters and pictures including the message "Act Now! We Need Quality Child Care and Safe After School Activities!" Mail them to the Children's Defense Fund "Child Care Now!" at 25 E Street, NW, Washington, D. C. 20001.

We will hold a national press conference this fall and will deliver your drawings to Congress. We hope to present

them with thousands of drawings from all over the country asking them to do what they need to do to keep our children safe and positively engaged when parents have to work.

There are so many children and families affected by this urgent need. Each day, more than 2 million Black children under six — or two-thirds of all Black pre-school children who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten — spend some or all of their day being cared for by someone other than their parents. Children of working mothers are entering care as early as six weeks of age and can be in care for 40 hours a week until they reach school age.

Child care and early education have become a fact of life for many Black families. In 1997, 72 percent of Black women with children under six, and 77 percent of Black women with children between the ages of six and 17 years old, were in the labor force.

Child care is a major household expense for working families. Full-day child care for one child costs \$4,000 to \$10,000 per year — more than what many families pay for college tuition at an in-state public university. For instance, the average annual price of child care in a center for a four-year-old is \$4,630 in Los Angeles, \$4,990 in Atlanta, and \$7,700 in New York City. Child care for infants and high

quality care is often even more expensive.

Many hard-working Black families earn too little to be able to afford the high cost of child care. About half of Black families with children earn less than \$23,000 a year, and half of Black families with children under six earn less than \$20,500 a year.

The cost of providing care for children can easily exceed a family's rent, mortgage, car payment, or groceries. A family earning \$25,000 could easily spend one-quarter of its income to pay for child care for one child — and the average family has two children. Families simply cannot afford the cost of good quality child care in addition to all of the other demands on their monthly budget.

Because for many families there seems to be no other choice, it has been estimated that nearly 5 million children nationwide are left unsupervised by an adult after school each week. Research

suggests that children who are left home alone are more likely to use alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes. Studies show that juvenile crime peaks between 3 to 7 p.m. when many children are unsupervised after school.

Since Black youth are overrepresented at every level of the juvenile justice system — they comprise only 14 percent of the total population but 28 percent of those arrested, 41 percent of those detained, and 52 percent of those waived into adult court — it is particularly crucial to offer safe and affordable quality child care for our children's afterschool time.

Write to your representatives in Congress. And, send us those drawings by your children. Those we elect to represent us must respond to the child care crisis today. We have to make them listen.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund.

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