

In his veto message, Romney argued that, even without special language and earmarks, “the Department of Education has sufficient funds to implement this program.” When we phoned the department to ask how they planned on funding and implementing Safe Schools next year, a DOE spokeswoman said she’d get back to us; she didn’t.

“Since the cuts began four years ago, there’s been an increase in bullying and violence,” said Grace Sterling Stowell, executive director of the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Youth (BAGLY). “It’s very sad that pocket change was vetoed in a line item that’s already been decimated. The safety net for youth is more fragile than ever, and it sends a very chilling message to young people that the governor is not supportive of who they are—it’s very sad.”

Similarly scorned and puzzled is Patricia Quinn of the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy. “I can’t explain why the cuts were made” to teen pregnancy prevention, she says.

Even the \$2 million pregnancy prevention programs were slated to receive under the legislature’s budget is much less than the \$5.5 million they received in 2001; with only \$1 million, Quinn fears they’re losing ground. Teen birthrates failed to drop in 2003, the last year for which data is available. It’s the first time the state’s rate has failed to drop since 1997; Worcester saw a 16 percent increase, while Boston has the highest number of children born to teens in the state. With Romney’s veto, Quinn said, neither city would receive any pregnancy prevention funding.

“I can’t say what his motivations are,” she says. “If it has to do with having an eye towards national politics, the kids in Worcester and Boston are getting hurt.”

Asked whether it’s counterintuitive for an increasingly vocal pro-life governor to cut programs that ultimately prevent abortions, Quinn replied, “There’s always a battle on the conservative side about whether to restrict the information teens get about healthy sexuality, and just tell them to say no.”

JP State Rep. Jeff Sanchez told the *Dig* that while legislators have come to expect national power plays from Romney, the cuts still hurt. “This isn’t the first time we’ve been dealing with this. There are certain areas of ideology—marriage, reproductive planning, GLBT youth are the big ones—that he follows the line on, and he goes right after them. And it gives him the ammunition he needs for the bigger picture. He’s talking to the people who listen to talk radio; he’s not talking about rebuilding the state party anymore. But we’re talking about saving lives here. These kids need help.” ⊗

DISPATCHES

**Invasion USA**

Walking down Comm. Ave. in Allston, you’re sure to stumble across a stencil or two—“Rethink Patriotism,” “Every Animal You Ate Ran For Her Life” and “Dude, Trucker Hats Fucking Suck, Dude.” A new stencil, with an out-of-this-world origin, has joined them. It can be found across the road from the Massachusetts Arts and Technology Charter High School.

On the sidewalk, there is some unknown script. Underneath it, a message in light blue letters. It reads, “www.alienglyph.com.” Another one was found on Beacon Street in direct sight of Fenway Park. Further investigation reveals other alien glyph stencils at Downtown Crossing, the Middle East in Cambridge, and the Virgin Megastore on the Newb. Make no doubt about it, Boston is being invaded.

Is this the work of a meme-maker trying to create the next “Andre the Giant Has a Posse” craze? Is this a message from the messianic madman behind the “Toynbee” tiles? Nope. In reality, it’s simply nothing more than a contest to promote Steven Spielberg’s latest stinker, *War of the Worlds*. It works like this: Cletus finds a glyph on the sidewalk, he takes his picture beside the glyph and he sends it in to Paramount Pictures. If Cletus is lucky, he’ll be among the handful of winners chosen from this batch to catch the movie premiere of *War of the Worlds*. Unfortunately, that day has come and gone. All that is left is a spray-painted stencil on the sidewalk. In other words, all that is left is graffiti.

Being quality-of-life-minded citizens, we contacted the city of Boston’s Graffiti Busters crew via an online form on the city’s website to take care of the mess. Three days later the city responded via e-mail, acknowledging that the crime had been reported. Crews were dispatched to help stanch the creep of advertising into every square inch of city life. --CHRIS HAIRE

Is gay the new black?

“This is my country and I want to serve it,”

22-year-old former servicewoman Megan Dresh told the *Globe* last week. Unfortunately, because she made the mistake of hippping her Army commander to the fact that she’s a lesbian, she won’t be able to bear arms in defense of freedom, liberty, or other important and vaguely defined words for the foreseeable future. Dresh and 11 other former servicepeople are part of a 12-person lawsuit, being played out in Boston, challenging the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on the grounds that the policy was driven by “an animus or prejudice.”

But while the Constitution might provide a suitable foundation for the suit, Dresh and company might have more luck seeking solace in US history, where, in wartime, prejudice has a pretty crappy record against practicality. David McCulloch’s latest book, *1776*, for example, contains several passages on how George Washington’s use of blacks, old men and boys in the Continental Army brought a rebuke by Congress and other arbiters of decency. Washington responded to this controversy by banning the insufficiently old, young and white from the army. “By year’s end, however,” McCulloch writes, “with new recruits urgently needed and numbers of free blacks wanting to serve, he would change his mind and in a landmark order authorize their enlistment.”

With the military consistently missing recruitment quotas, there’s good money on this problem solving itself in time. In fact, if the numbers don’t get up soon, Congress might be drafting a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy regarding the mentally retarded in the coming years. Stay tuned. --JOE KEOHANE

**We shall prevail and they shall not.**

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, on the terror attacks on London that left dozens dead and hundreds wounded. 7.7.05

About 1:30 this afternoon, the Muddy River was at 11 1/2 feet, and within two hours, it went over 15 feet.

T GM Daniel Grabauskas, after the scariest-looking sky ever unleashed torrential downpours that stalled traffic, dampened litter, knocked out power and flooded subway tunnels all over the region. 7.7.05

It’s a family issue. People will be watching to see what [Romney] does on this.

The Family Research Council’s Connie Mackey, on a measure allowing Bay State pharmacists to dispense the “morning-after pill” without a prescription. The measure was House-approved by a vet-proof majority, so Mitt is expected to strike back with more sanctimonious preening aimed at South Carolina. 7.6.05

I don’t mess with white girls no more. After OJ and Kobe? I’m all set.

Some dude waiting for a Silver Line bus, to a *Dig* staffer. 7.9.05

