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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In Black Struggle, Who's the Victim?

Re "Mr. Cosby, Stop Blaming the Victim," Commentary, July 12: As a black American educator working with colleagues in school systems across this nation, we meet and teach many of those to whom Bill Cosby refers, i.e., the "knuckleheads with droopy pants," and droopy ambitions and dropped parental responsibility, which Cosby feels has led to dimming prospects for the African American community.

However, what we find consistently in our work are urban students who struggle to find their place in the world.

They struggle mightily in the face of obstacles such as low expectations regarding their ability to learn and succeed by teachers and, at times, even by similar low expectations by their parents.

Cosby's remarks, as Earl Ofari Hutchinson has written, are a disservice to all the students who are oppressed by social and educational policies that often traumatize many black American schoolchildren and youths to the point that they internalize the stereotypes.

It does not have to be this way. I believe that we need to utilize those social-educational interventions that can turn the lives of a vast majority of children toward a brighter future.

Eric J. Cooper

President, National

Urban Alliance for

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Hutchinson has it backward. Society is the victim of the pathologies of the underclass, not the perpetrator.

Cosby should be applauded for demanding accountability in our poorest neighborhoods. The old, tired excuse-ridden "blaming the victim" mentality that Hutchinson espouses ensures that things will not improve.

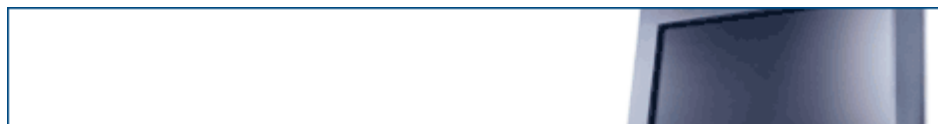
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