

BEN SARGENT

Action needed to save our at-risk generation

Fallibility a good reason to abolish death penalty

With the U.S. Supreme Court's rulings providing a fast-track to the hangman and the increasing number of people being sentenced to death,

It will be local efforts like these that will ultimately make the difference. Such efforts should be encouraged. If America is to avoid losing a generation, our next generation, we can no longer merely wring our hands and lament the situation. Strong, decisive action — and money — must be committed to improving the conditions of American youth.

It is not justice, or even revenge when we execute the innocent.

LETTERS

Global warming? These are the same folks who predicted a coming Ice Age in 1975. This theory predicts a rise of sev-

JOHN W. BROWDER
2313 Pineville Place

No tragedy

2013 Oxford
 JEFFREY W. OGDON
 781

ROBERT MELSHA
3923 River Oaks Circle
Temple

ROBERT MELSHA
223 River Oaks Circle
Temple

Gunman kills 8, himself in high-rise

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"At this point, we think the individual must have known someone. I think he was going after someone on the 34th floor at the Pettit & Martin law firm," Jordan said.

The attack began when the gunman apparently walked into Pettit & Martin's conference room with three semiautomatic pistols — one described by witnesses as an Uzi-type weapon — and opened fire, Ambrose said.

The gunman — described by police as heavyset, middle-aged and white — had been at the law office earlier in the day to give a deposition, said Wayne Jeffries, an attorney at the firm, which specializes in corporate litigation.

Jordan said authorities didn't know of a motive but believed the gunman planned the attack because he was so heavily armed.

"Not only did he have the weapons, but he also had a large cache of ammunition in a black canvas bag . . . hundreds and hundreds of rounds in the bag. So, he was there deliberately, with the intent to shoot someone," Jordan said.

Pettit & Martin employs about 175 lawyers, roughly half of whom work at the headquarters office that was attacked in the building at 101 California.

Another attorney at the firm, Kirk Jamieson, 33, said the Pettit



A victim at the 101 California building in San Francisco is wheeled to an ambulance by an emergency team on Thursday. Police say a gunman began firing inside the building before 3 p.m., killing 8 and himself.

& Martin firm occupies four floors of the tower, occupying space on the 33rd through the 36th floors.

"We heard reports of casualties on 32, 33 and 34," said Jill Burns, a secretary who works on the 26th floor.

One witness told radio station KCBS he saw a man firing an Uzi-type weapon on the 34th floor.

"I was on 35, and before I went down I asked someone to hold the door open because once it closes you can't get out," said the witness, a man who wasn't identified. "I went halfway down the stairs to

look and see what was going on, and he came into that staircase at

34, and I backed up very quietly." One woman on the 27th floor said she first learned of the shoot-

said she first learned of the shooting when Pettit & Martin employees burst onto her floor.

Nancy Asbill, a Pettit & Martin attorney, said she was in the restroom when the gunfire started.

"We heard the fire alarm," she said. "We thought it was a fire drill. Then we saw the bullet holes and saw the smoke. We ran out."

Many of the thousands of people who work in the office building said the first they learned some-

thing was wrong was when an announcement came over the building's public address system warning people to lock their doors and stay inside.

As employees huddled in their offices waiting for police escorts to elevators, police SWAT teams carrying M-16 rifles combed the building for the gunman.

A Police Department minister who tended to the dead and the injured inside the building, said, "This is the worst thing I have ever seen."

This article includes material from The New York Times News Service.

House votes to expand nation's Border Patrol

■ Measure adds 600 agents and increases funds to address illegal immigration

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ments and could not make a credible initial case that they were fleeing political persecution.

"The asylum system is broken," Mezzoli said at a news conference.

Mazzoli said at a news conference, "We have each year something like 100,000 applications, we have a backlog, basically, of 300,000 in the system. We have people obviously who are misusing this."

His legislation would provide for "expedited exclusion" of newcomers who arrive at airports or other points of entry without proper legal documents, unless the person claims fear of persecution. It also would require Immigration and Naturalization Service agents at six major U.S. airports to screen out passengers seeking to enter the United States with fraudulent documents.

If a claim of persecution is made, an asylum officer would decide whether the claim is credible enough to allow the person to seek asylum status. If the claim is rejected, the individual would be deported immediately. One applicant would be allowed to a second, on-site asylum officer. Applicants for asylum would have to act within 30 days of arrival.

Under the current system, foreigners who enter the country with suspicious documents, no documents or with insufficient basis for claiming asylum, are permitted to have hearings and often may make repeated appeals if they are turned down.

Immigration rights advocates said airport hearings would deprive legitimate asylum-seekers of adequate legal safeguards, including the right to counsel, and place a heavy burden on people who are unable to speak English.

"To do something at the airport on-site, is going to exclude the genuine refugees," said Carol Wolchok, director of the American Bar Association's Center for Immigration Law and Representation.

Welchok and other advocates of immigrant rights said the system for granting asylum suffers from too few examiners. They cautioned Congress against allowing itself to be pressured into taking ill-considered action because of the public furor over reports of immigrant smuggling in New York and California and the arrest of an asylum seeker in New York's World Trade Center bombing.

"The politicians see a kind of political platform here in terms of catering to the anti-immigrant sentiment," said the Rev. Richard Ryscavage, executive director of immigration and refugee services for the U.S. Catholic Bishops. "This is a product of the hysteria."

The debate over the Border Patrol funds also touched off strong feelings.

Some Hispanic lawmakers complained that immigrants from Mexico were being depicted as dope-smuggling welfare-seekers. Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Calif., for example, said he was saddened by the "monster image" that was being used to malign people who were only seeking a better life.

"It sounds like xenophobia - blame all the problems on immigrants," Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., said.

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