

False assumptions

May 8, 2010

Sometimes what we think is one thing turns out to be something exactly the opposite. You assume something is true when, in fact, it is not.

This was the case when I received a letter in the mail from a group called the Investor Protection Association For America. The official looking letter warned me that Congress was about to enact legislation on tax cuts, energy and the economy and I didn't have to "sit idly by" and accept what the new administration decides what to do. It urged me to tell Congress "what you think" and cautioned "don't let Congress make decisions without your input." The way I could make myself heard, according to the letter, was to fill out the enclosed survey and mail it back to the Association in the postage paid envelope. The "Survey to Congress" was just 10 multiple choice questions relating to tax cuts, the deficit, and energy policy. The survey ended with "it may be necessary to contact you regarding some aspects of this survey," so there was a space for my phone number.

Now, one might assume that such an official looking letter and survey was an easy way to register my opinions with Congress. That would be a totally false assumption.

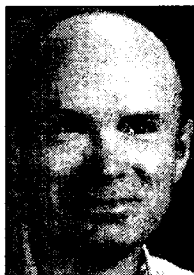
With a minimal amount of research I found out that the Investor Protection Association For America is nothing more than a scam to get your telephone number, which is then put on a list that is sold to investment companies so they can have their telemar-

keters call you. The addresses on the letter and the survey are different, although both purport to be "offices" in Washington, D.C. In reality both are mail boxes at UPS Stores.

The best strategy I read about in dealing with this letter was to start a barbecue with the pages and to mail back the empty post paid envelope. At least it will cost these scammers some return postage.

Another case of an assumption came across my desk relating to education. Charter schools have become the next big thing in education, with President Obama's education secretary, Arne Duncan, a supporter and philanthropists like Bill Gates promoting them. One might assume as a given fact that charter schools provide a better education than public schools. This would be a false assumption.

According to a New York Times article: "The majority of the 5,000 or so charter schools nationwide appear to be no better, and in many cases worse, than local public schools when measured by achievement on standardized tests, according to experts citing years of research. Last year one of the most comprehensive studies, by researchers from Stanford University, found that fewer than one-fifth of charter schools nationally offered a better



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education than comparable local schools, almost half offered an equivalent education and more than a third, 37 percent, were significantly worse."

It comes at no surprise that the study also found that the charter schools that perform the best are funded to hilt by celebrities. All the rest struggle because their main motive is for profit. Says the study:

"Academically ambitious leaders of the school choice movement have come to a hard recognition; raising student achievement ... is enormously difficult and often expensive."

Another old chestnut in the assumption game is that working in the Michigan public sector is a sweet deal compared to similar jobs in the private sector. If one thinks this is true then they are making a false assumption.

An article in the Detroit Free Press cited a study done by the Center for State and Local Government based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. The analysis compared public and private sector employees based on their comparable skills, education levels, training, and job locations.

In reality, (in 2008) Michigan state employees were paid 12 percent less than their private sector counter-

parts. Even when benefits like health insurance and pensions are factored in public employees still make 6.8 percent less. This has been the trend for at least 20 years.

Finally, if you've been following the controversy about Arizona's new immigration policy, I'm sure you've also noticed the groups that claim the policy is discriminatory. One such entity is the Mexican government. Mexico's president says the new law "opens the door to intolerance, hate, discrimination, and abuse."

One might assume that if Mexico thinks Arizona's new law is unfair to Mexican citizens to who illegally cross the border into the United States then the Mexican government must be more compassionate in its treatment of illegal entrants into Mexico from the United States (or some other country). This would be a false assumption.

According to Real Clear Politics, illegal entry into Mexico is a felony punishable by two years in prison. Document and marriage fraud are subject to fines and imprisonment. Evading deportation is punishable by ten years in prison. Foreigners may be kicked out of the country without due process. The reason no "visitors" in Mexico have objected to these policies is because pro-illegal alien speech by outsiders is prohibited by law.

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