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/Views of Mercury News Readers

Reagan promised this nation that when he made cuts in the budget, it would not be at the expense of the truly needy.

This is a humane approach, and we anticipated that the programs he would exempt from being cut would be the programs that have a "neediness factor for determining who is eligible for the program's benefits. ("Need" is determined by looking at both income and resources of the applicant or recipient trying to participate in the program, which is also known as a "means test.")

Last week Reagan announced the seven programs that he believes serve the "truly needy" and will not be subject to cuts. Of the seven programs — Social Security retirement, Veterans Disability benefits, Medicare (and not Medicaid which serves the poor), Headstart, Youth Employment Program, Free School Lunches and Sup-

plemental Security Income — SSI is the only program that has a need factor in its eligibility requirements, and all applicants or recipients are subject to a "means test."

We really can't see Social Security retirement or Veterans Disability benefit beneficiaries viewing themselves as paupers the way Reagan does because many of them are millionaires like he is.

The programs that provide primary relief to the "truly needy" and should surely be part of the Reagan list of those exempt from being cut because they serve the truly needy are "Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, Medicaid, and legal services. These (including SSI) are the only programs that have both an income and resource test to determine participants' need.

We hope Reagan and the public out there will do something to save the "truly needy" from the forthcoming blood bath (for the needy aged, blind, disabled and helpless and innocent children who are poor) being planned by the Reagan administration.

We hope that there are still some true Christians and human beings left out there who care about their neighbor who may be poor.

—Kevin M. Aslanian
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