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> ARIZONA REPUBLIC

> Letter to the Editor

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> I have to respond to your June 18th article "Sheriff's New Bus Adds

> Fuel to Feud". County bureaucrats'

> comments given to your reporters show quite clearly that they do not

> have the best interest of the citizens of Maricopa County at heart.

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> The decision to purchase the MCI prisoner bus with Jail Enhancement

> Funds (JEF) was simple.

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> This bus has an engine designed to run well beyond one million

> road-worthy miles and last at least 20 years.

> Conversely, the five modified school buses we currently use to

> transport inmates last only five years each and are constantly in the

> shop for repairs. They simply cannot stand up to the constant use.

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> At the start of this work week for example, Sheriff's Transportation

> found only one of the five buses were operational to transport nearly

> 1,000 inmates that day. Breakdowns of these school buses average

> three to five times a week. Repairs to these buses cost taxpayers

> almost \$200,000 in the past two and a half years.

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> Our solution? Buy a bus built to transfer inmates, not school

> children. We decided to not be penny wise and dollar foolish but

> rather pay more up front in order to get a reliable, long lasting

> vehicle that best meets the needs of our criminal justice system.

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> Yes, this particular bus was expensive but taxpayers did not buy it.

> The money which paid for this bus came from fines paid by criminals

> themselves.

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> Sheriff Arpaio is all about saving taxpayer money; his record is proof

> of that. The fact that a few county bureaucrats will allow this new

> bus to sit idle by refusing to have it insured and licensed is

> childish behavior and represents a reckless disregard to taxpayers.