

Cartoons for the Classroom

Presented by NIEonline.com and the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)



Courtesy Nick Anderson / Courier-Journal: 11/14/2001

Stimulating symbolism

Talking points

1. In this Nick Anderson cartoon, the bloated pig represents waste, greed and gluttony. ("Pork-barrel spending" is another metaphor for you to look up.) But in Chinese, American Indian and certain other cultures, the pig is a symbol of good luck and abundance. How would that interpretation of the pig symbol alter this cartoon's message?
2. "Wrap it in the flag" means to make something seem patriotic in order to make it more popular. But here the pig's too big. Explain the point the cartoonist is making.
3. This cartoon actually appeared in 2001 and refers to a different stimulus package, not today's. What happened in 2001 that prompted the government to try to stimulate the economy back then? What was different about that 2001 stimulus and today's? Does the cartoon's message of waste and patriotism fit today's situation just as well?

Additional resources

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists
<http://editorialcartoonists.com/>

More by Nick Anderson
<http://blogs.chron.com/nickanderson/>

Between the lines

"The record-breaking \$787 billion fiscal stimulus package that Congress passed in February is not breaking records on the job front. In California, with 11.5 percent unemployment, it has done little more than prevent layoffs of state workers.

"In response, Democrats who sold the stimulus as a way to cap the national unemployment rate at 8 percent are scrambling to explain why hundreds of thousands of jobs disappear each month. . . .

"President Obama said the stimulus would "save or create" 4 million jobs, but 6.5 million have been lost since the recession began 19 months ago."

- Carolyn Lochhead
San Francisco Chronicle
7/12/2009