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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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## Few Bad Apples Among Debt Collectors

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The July 28 front-page article "As Debt Collectors Multiply, So Do Consumer Complaints" focused too much on extreme collection abuses.

This does a disservice to an important industry. According to the Federal Reserve, consumer debt totaled \$10.3 trillion at the end of 2004. Professional debt collectors provide a cost-effective way to recoup funds for enterprises extending this credit, including businesses, hospitals, colleges and even government. The collection industry employs 445,000 people, and Bureau of Labor Statistics projections show faster-than-average job growth in the industry through 2012.

The article was fair in pointing out that debt collectors made an estimated 4 billion phone calls last year, but only 58,687 complaints were lodged with the Federal Trade Commission. What it didn't mention was that not all of these complaints represent violations of the law.

The egregious abuses the article highlighted are rare. The vast majority of collection agencies and debt buyer firms carefully train their collectors to ensure regulatory

compliance.

MIKE GINSBERG

Bethesda

*The writer is president of a strategic advisory firm to the debt collection industry.*

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