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EDITORIALS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR letters@washpost.com

A good start to a conversation on nonprofit businesses

The Feb. 21 Metro article "Mission trumps money for some bookstores and gift shops" was a start to the conversation about nonprofit businesses in the D.C. region.

I hope that future articles focus not just on the challenges but also on what sustains the businesses and much more about their mission.

For example, Teaching for Change could not have run the independent bookstore at Busboys and Poets for five years, or survived as a nonprofit organization for 20 years, without a lot of support from customers, donors, partners and volunteers.

As for our mission, operating an independent bookstore allows us to play a key role in providing access to independent ideas in this area. We carefully select and promote books and authors based on merit rather than some publisher's marketing budget. Most chain bookstores choose which books to display prominently and which authors to host



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Patrons of Busboys and Poets gather in the book section of the store.

based on how much publishers are willing to pay. We choose books and authors that help make sense of the world.

Every day, we hear from people who value the access to books and discussions that go beyond the headlines. That is what keeps us going.

DEBORAH MENKART, Washington

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