

No. 1: a token measure

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Pardon my cynicism, but I don't see much point in writing this column. By this time in the political season, most people have their minds set about the general election on Tuesday.

Most who read this would gain nothing from a discussion of candidates, because young people are notoriously apathetic about voting.

Amendment No. 1

The issue on the general election ballot which most directly affects students is Constitutional Amendment No. 1. It would install the student body presidents of the three NU campuses on the Board of Regents as nonvoting members.

Although ASUN and other supporters of this amendment probably mean well, it should be defeated.

We need reform, not tokenism. Passage of the student-regent law will close an issue which barely has been opened restructuring power at the University.

The regents have full control of NU government, within the confines of authority granted it by the Legislature. They can control any aspect of University life and operations they want. They can construct a classroom building and

determine what will be taught inside. They can build a dormitory and control the private lives of students living there.

Governing someone else

Democracy implies that the electorate governs itself by choosing representatives. However, the Board of Regents is a body chosen by the electorate to govern somebody else—the students.

Granted, the people of Nebraska have an interest in the University because it is partially tax-supported. But that interest ends when they no longer are affected by a decision made in the University's operation. Such decisions should be made by the people whom they affect, not by the regents.

Personal life control

Whom dormitory students associate with at what hours does not affect the people of this state. Students' personal lives therefore should not be within the domain of regent control. But they are.

So the real issue is limiting the regent's power.

The legislature can do this. It can limit the regents to a general role in operating the University and leave the specifics to students, faculty and administration. Our lobbying efforts must turn there.

Wasting energy

We are wasting our energy on divisions such as the student regent bill. True reform should be our goal.

If the student regent amendment passes, the current power structure will become more entrenched than ever. We will have deceived ourselves into accepting an ineffective mockery of self-government.

Three campus politicians without voting power can do more than beg big daddy regent for candy to keep them quiet. Meanwhile, self-determination falls by the wayside.

Our brightest hope for reform came last year when ASUN and RHA filed a lawsuit against the regents to stop their violations of dormitory students' constitutional rights.

Unfortunately, the leaders of those organizations grasped at the token held out to them when visiting hours were extended. They lost sight of the central issue and dropped the suit. We can't afford to lose our way again.

I encourage you to vote against Amendment No. 1. Then write a letter to your state senator to explain your vote.

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