

opinion/editorial

Register to vote your voice can affect issues

Apathy need not characterize this campus.

Important choices that directly affect students will be made this election and students must realize they can make an impact on the issues.

Every issue and candidate on the ballot will affect students. This election we will choose senators, state legislators, regents and the governor. These leaders control the university budget, how our fees are spent and to some extent how we conduct our lives.

If students are upset about decisions the regents have made, now is the time to research what kind of voting behavior they have exhibited and actively voice approval or disapproval of your regent.

Your vote can make a difference when one considers that about half the registered voters turn out for an off-year election.

Registering is a simple process and should not be overlooked.

An easy way to register is to take a jaunt down to the City-County building on 11th and K streets. Registrations takes place from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Vietnam vets are shuffled out of sight

Vietnam veterans are accustomed to being slighted by the Carter administration. But the newest affront has to be painful in still another way. Early this year, the president directed that by April the administration would announce both a full review of the problems of the Vietnam-era veterans and the administration's legislative plans to ease those problems.

a Carter assistant—"the White House feels no more concern over veterans' rights now than over other areas"—is a major reason the Council on Vietnam Veterans was bitterly disappointed by the President's proposals.

Bright side only

Its director, Robert Muller, is a Marine veteran and lawyer who is confined to a wheelchair due to combat injuries.

He said that "during Vietnam, it was suggested that we leave Southeast Asia and declare ourselves victors. That appears to be the administration's policy regarding the Vietnam veteran: Let's look on the bright side of things and say that the veteran is in fine shape."

The president's review, which did indeed cite favorable statistics in veterans' employment, education, and services, said: "It is a tribute to the caliber of those who served that most Vietnam-era veterans have already adjusted very successfully to civilian life."

Irks critics

What irks critics like Muller is that after the review acknowledges the harsher realities—21 percent of the veterans earn less than \$7,000 a year, high rates of suicide, alcoholism and psychosis—it offers limited remedies at all to help the significant minority that is still hurting.

For example:

—On the GI Bill, the old inequity of veterans in some states being forced to pay higher tuitions than veterans in other states is not dealt with.

—The administration, after long

opposing the extension of a 10-year delimiting date on the GI Bill, now supports the plan for the educationally or economically disadvantaged. This still leaves out a large number of other veterans.

—In unemployment, the administration relies heavily on public service jobs through the CETA program. But this program had earlier goals which went unmet. Eight months were needed to put an official charge of the veterans' jobs program. But in less than a year, this appointee was asked to resign, and no permanent replacement has been found. This go-round—taking a long time to find someone who wasn't up to the job, and the leaving the job unfilled—illustrates the lack of support for the program from the White House.

In promising to grant assistance to veterans seeking discharge review, little could be done to reduce the lengthy 12 to 18 months to complete the process. Nothing is mentioned about the outreach efforts to inform the eligible veterans. Only after the ACLU won a suit last August did the Department of Defense notify 47,500 "bad paper" veterans that they might be eligible for reconsideration. Even then, that number is less than 10 percent of the eligible.

Bill costly

During the long delay of administration, a coalition of 14 Vietnam veterans in Congress was at work. It has proposed a comprehensive bill that fully addresses the major problems. It is costly—about \$1 billion, against the \$250 million package of the president.

It is true that funds are tight. But one source of possible money is in the pending veterans pension bill. The House Budget Committee said that the money going into this costly legislation for non-service disabilities could be better used for Vietnam veterans.

And this leads back to the question raised by Robert Muller: Can the administration be content with the bright side or does it have a solemn commitment to deal more vigorously with the dark side—the less visible grievances that have yet to be resolved?

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Colman McCarthy

The review and proposals appeared last week—six months late, and only four days before Congress was scheduled to adjourn. The symbolism couldn't be missed: As Vietnam fades from memory, the warriors who still suffer its effects also can be allowed to fade from view. What's one more delay?

More unsettling

Veterans saw another symbol that may be even more unsettling. It was not the president who came forward to announce his new policies, but the vice-president. To mid-level government officials dealing with day to day veterans' problems, this is a signal that the pressure isn't on. With the president not making himself visible and without giving an extra push from above, why should those in the bureaucracy below go all out?

The difference between an extra effort and the attitude expressed last March by



Some childish students justify regents playing parents

Last night I had the unenviable task of convincing my sophomore roommate that "In loco parentis" was not the Eastern Nebraska version of the Panhandle's loco-weed.

I told him it was the theory that the Board of Regents act in place of our parents while we are students here at UNL, thus giving them authority to declare I can't have my natural mother in my room before 10 a.m.

He claimed my explanation made sense, but then, he's always been good at humoring me.

michael gibson

"However," he said, "I must observe that while the theory can be differentiated from the weed, whomever dreamed up the former must have consumed a considerable amount of the latter."

"Furthermore, I suspect that since the regents show no sign of recovery, someone must be allowing the noxious weed to grow here on campus, probably the student body."

Children or not?

By this time I was wondering if the Regional Center had room for this obviously semi-sane Scot.

"I haven't lived with you that long," he answered. "Just observe that when a regent says students are children and should be treated as such, the students insist on proving him right."

"When the blizzard closed school last year, how many students spent the day catching up on homework and how many spent it hurling iceballs at motorists, disrupting traffic and promoting general disorder?"

I had to admit student actions that day were a major factor in Chancellor Young's

decision to open school the next day, whereupon my gloating roommate produced a newspaper clipping entitled "Regents squelch mandatory speaker fee."

"Remember how we all denied that conservatives didn't have a chance to voice their views via the speakers program? Yet how many of us were interested in letting

Westmoreland air his opinions?

Roomie zoomed in for the kill. "Students want more control of their lives and their student fees. So let a regent say our elected government, ASUN, shouldn't be given more power since it doesn't represent all students, and we vehemently disagree with him via the highest turnout in ASUN recent history: 15 percent."

I scoffed and told him that he was just pointing out isolated cases.

"True," he said, "But with one case of rowdiness, a regent thinks he can justify voting against the will of the students. If he's looking for an excuse to vote the way he wants instead of the way he should, just one beer bust in a residence hall can 'and has' done the trick."

Liberty means responsibility

"Besides, if students are so unhappy about the regents, or about government officials in general, why do they tolerate them?"

I was going to argue until I remembered that people 18 to 24 years old have the lowest voting percentage of any age group in the country.

"But changing things takes effort," he continued, "as much effort as going down to the County/City Building and registering to vote."

I stalked out of the room, livid with rage at his cynical attitudes about young people and shouted something about students being free not to care.

"Perhaps," he continued, "but as a fellow Scotsman named Shaw once said, 'Liberty means responsibility—which is why most men dread it.'"

