

Editorial

Reagan's tax bill represents a broken campaign promise

What is important to remember about the recent passage of Ronald Reagan's \$98.3 billion tax bill is that it represents the breaking of a promise.

The promise came from the president during the latter months of 1980, when he was campaigning for office.

His campaign platform: He was going to cut taxes — 30 percent during a three-year period — and he was going to balance the budget.

Forget that economists widely disputed the possibility of doing both simultaneously. Forget that the budget deficit will be at least \$103 billion for fiscal year 1983 (according to the current Newsweek), even with last week's tax bill.

But remember this: Reagan broke his promise to cut taxes, a promise he made while campaigning.

To be fair, the new bill won't wipe out

the originally promised reductions in personal taxes. They will remain intact.

But taxpayers will be stung with paying their share of the \$98.3 billion bill beginning next January. So while the president has not reneged on giving us a tax cut, he has imposed a new measure to take those cuts away.

In the final tally, we aren't getting much of any cut at all.

Perhaps the president knew all along that he wouldn't be able to balance the national budget while stopping the flow of incoming tax dollars. But he let us believe it was possible.

The incident should stand as a warning to state and local politicians now planning their heaviest campaigning. The Reagan flip-flop on the tax bill is an example of how those politicians ought not to campaign — with promises they later have to break.

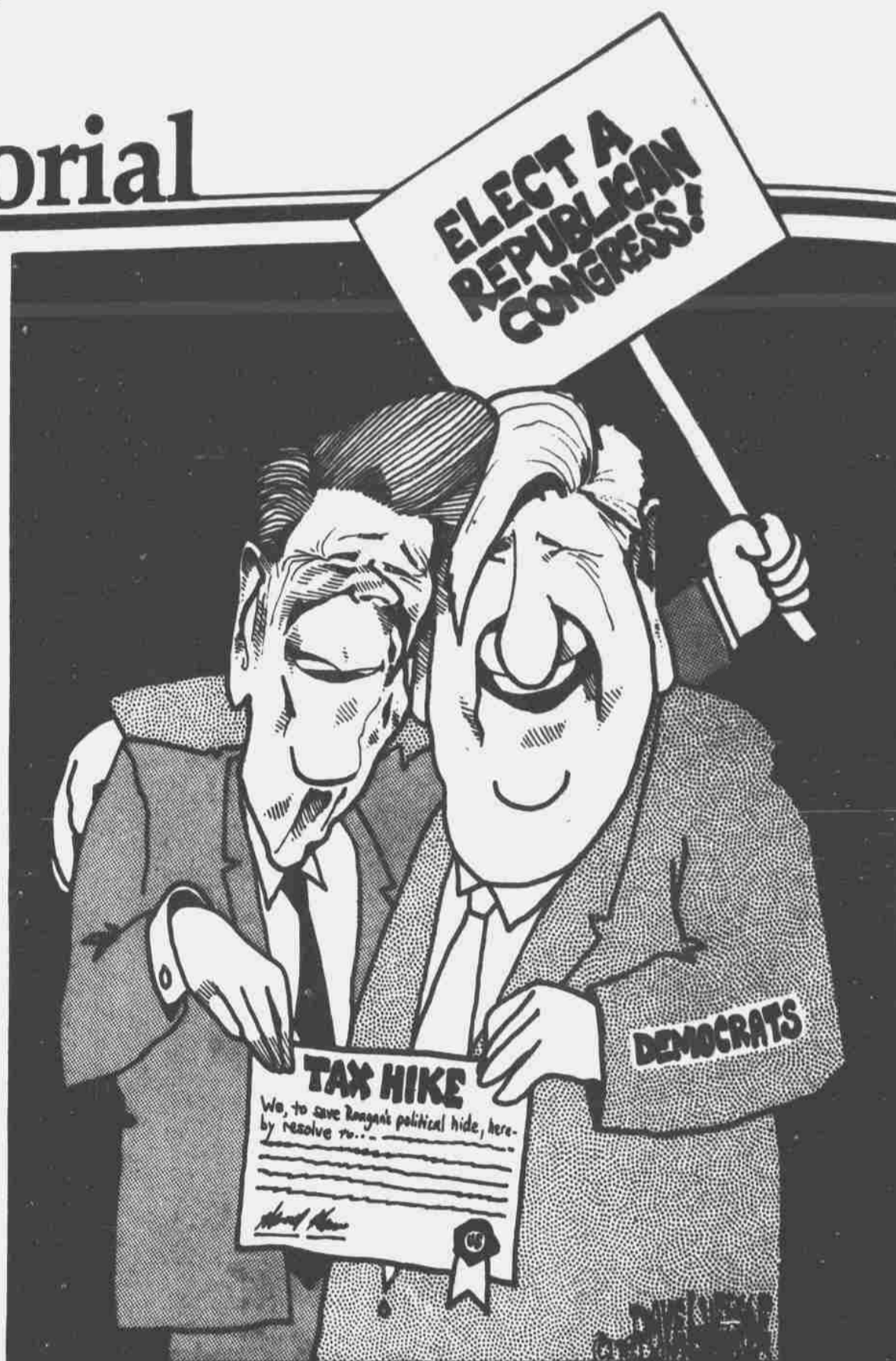
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The Daily Nebraskan welcomes letters to the editor from individuals and groups. The letters can be opinions on the stories, editorials, columns, guest opinions and other material in the newspaper, or views on topics not covered.

Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. Letters should

include author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Address all submissions to: Letters to the Editor, Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb., 68588.



There's no tipping a balanced budget

My fellow Americans, I come before you now to ask you to come to the aid of this great nation as you have so many times in the past.

We are, indeed, in a time of great national peril. Our debt, as a people, is now well over \$1 trillion. Fortunately a small group of wise and courageous men are dedicating their valuable time to doing something about this Ameri-



Matthew Millea

can tragedy. They have foregone six-figure salaries at Bechtel and other patriotic multinationals in order to accept the challenging task of reducing our huge federal deficits.

What, you may ask, could you possibly achieve which would be on a par with these captains of the military-industrial complex? You may be surprised to learn there is a great deal you can do. You are not insignificant. You can make a difference!

The course of action I am modestly proposing is quite simple. Undoubtedly you are aware of the tax reform bill which our Congress has passed, with great reluctance I might add. One of its chief provisions would require the

Internal Revenue Service to audit restaurants whose employees do not report income from tips of at least 12 percent of gross income. This certainly seems like an intelligent reform, does it not?

Unfortunately, those who adopted it give it little chance of curing the corruption which is so rampant among America's servants.

Next time you are at your favorite four-star restaurant, observe the habits of those who wait on you. Notice how their glance continually shifts from coffee cup to coffee cup? Certainly these people are not to be trusted with cash gratuities that ought to be reported to the IRS.

Yes, you may ask, but what can I do to stop them from their shameless evasion of duty and country? I have devised a simple yet ingenious plan. Next time you eat out, regardless of the quality of the service, neglect to leave a tip. But don't, by any means, stop there. Take the cash you would have wasted on that sneaky waiter (6 percent to 8 percent in most instances) and mail it to Donald Reagan at the U.S. Treasury.

Servants are notorious for using their low incomes as tax shelters. Wouldn't you rather see the full amount of your charitable gratuity go to reduce our horrendous national debt? Please make haste, though, the Treasury owes Dow Chemical Corp. a \$100 million tax refund this year. It's the least we can do for them. After all, they invented napalm, didn't they?

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Real success found in good communication skills

A dangerous and all-invasive illusion, a myth, has cropped up at UNL and most other American campuses. Many college students see little benefit or future value in acquiring solid, written communication skills.

In the Age of Mechanization and Technology many students seem willing to silently accept what Omaha businessman Sam Bittner calls "corporate socialism" — where the young graduate from business or engineering

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crawls into the industrial "niche," is told "not to rock the boat" and become a "mechanic, not a decision-maker."

To write well, to clearly communicate verbally, requires patience, practice and desire — an effort too few young people are willing to do. Certainly today's students are no less capable than past generations of achieving these skills. They simply see no long-term profitable reason for doing so. In that narrow reasoning lies the illusion.

Inaccurate written communication costs American business \$1 billion-plus annually, according to a recent Fortune magazine survey of top executives of Fortune's 500 companies. In that survey the executives ranked written and verbal communication skills as the most

important quality for business and industrial leaders — ahead of technical skills, financial and marketing ability. Poor communication skills result in wasted time, lost contracts and alienated customers.

A recent Wall Street Journal article noted that modern business, recognizing the failure of purely business- and technical-oriented executives, is now openly seeking broadly trained, high-achieving liberal arts graduates to become "general associates." The recruiting of accountants, engineers and M.B.A.s has not stopped, of course, but many businesses have found that those graduates with sound communication skills and broad education in the traditional liberal arts curriculum (history, literature, sociology, psychology, art and music) bring flexible minds and sound reasoning skills that business needs to be competitive and profitable.

This sentiment is echoed by William R. Sears, a nationally renowned business consultant from San Francisco, who notes that American business cries for those graduates who have mastered the skills of communication and who "enjoy the supple bounce" of flexibility, which only a broad background in science, letters and languages bring.

As long ago as 1961, one of America's most successful business leaders, William Benton, who later became a U.S. senator and assistant secretary of state, pointed out the failure of narrow specialization in undergraduate business programs.

"Virtually all top business leaders agree that a solid background in the liberal arts is the best preparation for coping with new ideas constantly clamoring for an executive's consideration," he said.

Do professionals need to learn to write well? In the six years I have taught at UNL I have had two M.D.s, one dentist, a veterinarian and a pharmacist ask me what they could do to "learn to do what I should have learned in school but thought as a doctor I wouldn't need." One physician said three of his articles for medical journals had been rejected "because my writing is a mishmash." These professionals discovered late what I have known for years — success is boosted by generalization, not specialization, and the ability to write.

For "Johnny" or "Susie" to realize the value of a broad education and solid written and oral communication skills, every department, every professor, every administrator, chancellor or president on this and every other campus should work actively to dispel the myth of profit over learning.

With the volume of articles published by business leaders in the past two decades advising students to acquire the best and broadest education possible, why does the myth continue that it is unimportant or, at the least, not really vital? Is it because "Johnny" can't, or doesn't, read?

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