

# Editorial

## Abortion: Moral, not federal issue

Saturday marked the 10th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion, and the issue is as volatile as ever.

On Jan. 22, 1973, the court ruled that a woman is entitled to an abortion by the 14th Amendment's "right to personal privacy," but the right is "not unqualified," allowing government to limit abortions after the third month of pregnancy.

About 2,000 people marched in downtown Lincoln to show their opposition to the ruling. The protest drew national attention, as similar demonstrations were held in other states.

In Washington, D.C., where the number of abortions out-number births, about 26,000 gathered for a national anti-abortion march.

Though the findings are sometimes inconsistent, according to U.S. News and World Report, the public seems to be shifting toward more support for the rights of the unborn.

For those who oppose abortion, the question is a moral one. It seems unlikely that the abortion decision will be reversed, but President Reagan restated his anti-abortion stance and endorsed a bill that would prohibit federal funds for abortion.

The recent "Respect Human Life Act," introduced by Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., contains some controversial items regarding when human life begins, but the administration's stance on federal abortion funds is appropriate.

Since an amendment in September 1977, federal funds have been unavailable for most abortions. In the year before that decision, government-funded abortions

numbered 295,000 — and \$50 million, U.S. News' figures said.

Fifteen states (Nebraska not included) and the District of Columbia currently provide \$55 million a year for more than 200,000 abortions. That's a lot of money spent for something that many taxpayers object to.

The Hyde bill would also exclude federal money for abortions covered by government workers' health insurance, abortion research and family-planning programs that promote abortion. The latter alone would cut a large portion of the \$124 million given yearly to groups like Planned Parenthood. Such groups could be required to separate their abortion-related services from other forms of counseling.

Reagan upheld his belief Saturday by saying that "God's greatest gift is human life and that we have a duty to protect the life of an unborn child."

Though Reagan and some top officials are strongly against abortion, legislation is slow to get passed. Maybe it's because proponents on both sides are over-eager to push their views on each other. They tend to clump together a list of unrelated provisions that, taken together, are not supported by a majority.

When this happens bill after bill, year after year, both sides end up wasting their breath — and our money. The pro-life, pro-choice issue is too involved to be covered by sweeping generalizations and legislation.

Let's keep the issue specific enough to act on. Hyde has the right idea in keeping federal funds out of it — but let the medical and ethical questions stand up to their own tests.



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## Silence--A menace to civil rights?

The U.S. Constitution has, according to a New Jersey judge and the American Civil Liberties Union, been ravished. The instrument of this outrage is a New Jersey



George Will

law which the judge says "is unconstitutional on its face and as applied, in that it violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments. . . and that immediate and irreparable injury will result to plaintiffs . . ."

Whoa! The law that is pregnant with such awfulness says:

"Principals and teachers in each public elementary and secondary school . . . shall permit students to observe a one-minute period of silence to be used solely at the discretion of the individual student, before the opening exercises of each school day, for quiet and private contemplation or introspection."

According to the ACLU, that violates the constitutional guarantee against "establishment" of religion. What is the irreparable injury — that a minute of silence will cause to anyone? No doubt a few children and parents will find it offensive that someone may use the minute for prayer.

But since when is it an "injury" to be offended by what might be going on in someone's head? Such chaos is what a society comes to when it believes that every griev-

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## Computer system 'a disaster'

It's very interesting that the computer scientists, who work in closed and coherent systems, were the ones who started a sit-in at UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale's office — now called an "extended visitation." But since computer programmers put systems together, they know that when systems fail to apply, something



Eric Peterson

has to come from outside the "ordinary channels."

And the system isn't working. Lester Lipsky, a UNL computer science professor, has called it "archaic, decaying, dilapidated and a disaster."

Any UNL student who has taken a computer science course has known long white nights in overheated terminal rooms waiting for a place to open, often seeing the system go down and a lot of half-completed work with it. The terminals are old and slow and the system itself has more than reached its capacity.

"Quantity is actually more important than updating," Lipsky said. "Massive access is what we are lacking." Enrollment in the computer science department has tripled in the last 10 years, while funding and courses, to say the least, haven't kept pace.

"As more segments of the economy recognize the use of computers, the job market for computer literate people increases," Lipsky explained, to the point that "there are three times more jobs than qualified people in some areas."

Every college and department has its problems. The computer science depart-

ment simply has felt the Thone budget crunch before anyone else and worse than anyone else.

Another part of the problem is the failure to anticipate the present demand for computer science training. Lipsky pointed out that the business and engineering colleges also have bulging enrollments, but have the advantage of a long tradition in planning for the future. Those colleges have sometimes "overproduced" and sometimes "underproduced" students for the job market so they have some way to estimate college needs in the future. Because the computer science department began in 1968, Lipsky said, "We've never reached a norm from which we could fluctuate."

There's an ironic twist to the situation. At the same time UNL is in overload, the president of Union College across town announced that there will be computer terminals in every residence hall room next fall. The small Seventh Day Adventist college is spending nearly half a million dollars to get computers for its students, and is making sure they use them; the faculty voted to require a two-hour computer literacy course for all students. It would be hard to compete with their move into the computer age because Union College is much smaller. "The needs of their entire college are less than the needs of this department," Lipsky said.

But they have faced reality, in one of its aspects at least, which is something some state senators and administrators seem to avoid because of the limits they choose to put on whatever they are looking at. What will they do with computer scientists sitting quietly in the chancellor's office? The sight could knock some blinders off and bring truths home to roost.

## Letters

### Gandhi was truly a 'man for the time'

Steve Abariotes' review of the movie "Gandhi" (Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 21.) was excellent. Abariotes was probably ambiguous: "The minute grain of rationality at the center of Gandhi's logic is imperceptible, even to him, yet powerful enough to move millions to passively resist." I am certain that Gandhi was aware of the course of action he had launched, keeping in view the diversity of India.

I had the opportunity to witness the location shooting of the movie in India by Sir Richard Attenborough.

Gandhi was truly a "man for the time." Einstein remarked on hearing of Gandhi's death that "the future generation will scarcely believe that such a man walked on earth." To cite an incident, my father, who was actively associated with the Indian freedom movement for more than 20 years, related this to me.

The Rev. Charles Andrews, a British missionary, and my father had helped a man, who had come from the distant south to Gandhi's place (Wardha) requesting some financial help. Gandhi bluntly told him that he cannot give him any money, but offered him a job in his house doing regular chores. The man was disappointed and penniless. After a few days, he came to my father and asked for help. My father and Andrews, an intimate and colleague of Gandhi, gave him the necessary money. The news somehow reached Gandhi's ears. The next morning, after the end of prayer meeting, Gandhi called my father and asked him

to vacate the place immediately. My father was aghast. Gandhi's anger was that the man could have saved the long journey from his home town to Wardha, and spent it usefully, rather than "beg" him. And by his act, my father had "robbed" the man of his self-esteem by "doling" out the manna. The issue in question was the principle.

While the movie is a welcome addition to the growing work on the man, the irony, in this case, is that the media seems to be the message.

V. Raghunath

### Native assistance in movie omitted

While the review of "Gandhi" (Daily Nebraskan, Jan. 21.) was fair in its treatment of the film itself, your reviewer revealed his cultural myopia in not acknowledging the Indian contribution to a film about India. Nothing was mentioned about the performances of the talented Indian actors or that one-third of the production costs were met by the Indian government, (lest we assume that it was produced by Columbia Pictures, which only handles its distribution).

The most amazing statement, though, was that a renowned musician like Ravi Shankar was ignored for his own accomplishments and merely identified as a "Beatles' mentor."

David Woodman  
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