

# Editorial



## Tax checkoff helps candidates unPAC their funding troubles

Political Action Committees buy and sell government influence at the federal and state level.

Special interest groups also play a role in this capitalist compromise. It takes money to get elected. You need to be rich from the start, and court the PACs and industry in order to fund the massive advertising campaigns that make or break politicians.

State Sen. Vard Johnson of Omaha has introduced a bill that would decrease the influence of special interest groups and PACs in Nebraska.

LB1012 would create a box on state income tax forms where voters could check off a \$1 donation to a legislative campaign fund.

Legislators could choose to run or not to run according to the rules of the bill. If they did, a \$16,000 spending limit would be placed on spending for primary and general elections. A maximum \$7,200 could be used from the new fund for the general election.

If a candidate chooses not to participate in the bill's restrictions, there would be political disadvantages.

One opponent, using LB1012, can

say honestly: "Special interest is funding this man's campaign. Who is he accountable to? The public? Or the PAC that just gave his campaign \$5,000."

As well as decreasing the influence of PACs, LB1012 would curb skyrocketing campaign costs. A candidate who isn't already rich would stand a chance in a state senate race.

A similar bill in New Jersey got \$1 from 31 percent of the voters there, Johnson said. He estimated in a legislative hearing Thursday that if 20 percent of Nebraska's 800,000 voters checked off a dollar, \$16,000 would be raised for the fund. Since there are two years before senate races, \$320,000 could be raised.

At the hearing of the Miscellaneous Subjects Committee, Sen. Merle Von Minden of Allen asked Johnson why the system should be changed. "It's worked this way for years," he said.

Johnson responded that LB1012 was an experiment. There would be no harm if the Legislature decides it would not work.

LB1012 is a worthwhile experiment. Politicians are continually losing credibility with voters. This is one way to regain some of it.

—Chris Welsch

## Arts center 'dream' reveals progress syndrome reality

Plans to construct a \$20 million performing arts center on the UNL campus reveal a fundamental error in university officials' thinking, an error which may well be one of the bases of their institution's current malaise.

That error is equating progress with increasing the square footage of university property and buildings, an idea

talk legislators out of \$7 million of the construction costs and solicit \$3 million from private sources.

One has to wonder if such a proposal is not frivolous when home economics students have to watch classes on television, degree programs in two colleges and the NU Medical Center are being eliminated and UNL faculty members remain among the lowest paid in their profession.

A \$10 million donation is hard to decline, but the Lied gift carries strings which make it understandable — \$10 million strings. The gift demands that its recipient bear a burden which it is simply not capable of bearing. To attempt the feat would be nothing short of foolhardy.

The money, if it did not require matching funds, would be a tremendous boon to the UNL theatre department. As it stands, it would be a detriment. Even if UNL could raise matching funds, the proposed facility would suffer from lack of support. Attendance at current theatre department productions indicates that the demand for such activities is being met.

Chancellor Martin Massengale called the proposal part of a dream. A dream it is, a dream of grandeur. Unfortunately, it is a dream we at UNL cannot afford to pursue, at least for now. We must open our eyes and recognize the fact that fiscal bonds prevent progress through capital construction. Such a realization could dispel the myth that more square feet of property equals progress and allow the university to improve itself in less tangible, but more important areas.



**Christopher Burbach**

which reveals a deeper philosophy of mandating progress and rejecting the status quo.

In light of Nebraska's economic straits, now is an excellent time to question both notions.

Monday's Daily Nebraskan carried three stories which provide fine examples of the misjudgment caused by the Progress Syndrome.

The stories reported events at Saturday's meeting of the NU Board of Regents. Those events included an announcement of the \$10 million Lied Foundation gift and resulting arts center construction plan, a decision to spend \$400,000 to purchase land adjoining the UNO campus, and consideration of funding cutbacks and reallocations.

The proposed arts center would require \$10 million in university funds for its construction alone, plus an undetermined amount for its maintenance. The administration hopes to



## Letters

### Voices of unrest serve planet

Daniel Zariski's letter (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 14) is a masterpiece of meaningless rhetoric. Although the purpose of the letter is obscured by the conservative double-talk, I think Zariski intended to decry the liberalism and political activism of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

I don't believe Mr. Zariski remembers or understands what was the cause of the political activism of the period. America was involved in a purposeless war in Southeast Asia in which many thousands of American soldiers were being killed. The country had sat still for this through most of the '60s, but as the body counts on the nightly news rose, so did the level of political activism and social unrest among the younger generation, especially on college campuses. Young Americans be-

gan exercising some of the basic freedoms we value so highly in this country — the freedom of assembly, the right to dissent and the freedom of speech. These rights were won for us by the political activists who founded this country in 1776.

As American soldiers are again dying in far away lands, so are the seeds of political unrest sown. The people will once again have to join together to make their voices heard to the self-serving bureaucrats in Washington. The people's message will serve to make the government act with the best interests of the entire human race and of the planet itself in mind.

Tim Kettler

junior

natural science

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## Reagan re-election threatens U.S. interests

A re-election of President Reagan is a clear threat to American security. The recent military operations in Grenada, Nicaragua, Lebanon, El Salvador and in Europe, to name a few, have put

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the United States at an all-time low in foreign policy relations with the Soviet Union, Europe and Latin America since the Cold War. Reagan, and his administration, are solely responsible for these new developments. These military operations have not only destroyed the arms negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, but have also brought heavy criticism from U.S. allies.

The Reagan administration deployment of nuclear weapons into Europe

has not only stifled any type of arms control agreement with the Soviet Union but has also provoked the Soviet Union into deploying more of its nuclear arsenal force into the "European theatre." This disproves the "hawkish" theory that the Soviet Union will threaten the United States at the same pace, regardless of U.S. foreign policies.

This is also the first administration unable to get the Soviet Union to agree on an arms control agreement of any kind in over a decade. The strife between the United States and the Soviet Union is the major threat to world stability.

President Reagan has also worsened the relationships between the United States and its own allies. The United States gave the Soviet Union a powerful propaganda weapon when it invaded Grenada, besides adding to an already growing anti-American senti-

ment stemming from other military operations involving U.S. forces and covert military actions throughout the world.

The Economist reports that Europeans see "Reagan as trigger-happy, unreliable, an alarming president to have control over nuclear weapons...a jumpy hard-liner." Not only is the Eastern Bloc alarmed with Reagan but the leaders of such prominent allies as France, Germany and England are as well. This is evident in their condemnation of U.S. foreign policy (the U.N. General Assembly voted 109 to 9 to deplore "armed intervention" in Grenada). Again, Reagan is not securing safe foreign policy relations, not only with the Soviet Union, but with U.S. allies as well.

Europe's opinion and support of the United States is crucial because of its international power and the balance

of power. European support has degenerated to a point of questionable stability with Reagan's administration. The United States cannot tolerate or afford to risk the lives and well-being of its citizens for another four years.

President Reagan in only three years has reduced the United States status within the international balance of power to that of an aggressive counterpart to the Soviet Union. Recent trends of aggression under Reagan have given new impetus to anti-American trends around the world, and have again gambled away U.S. credibility. As concerned U.S. citizens we should heed the warnings from the Eastern Bloc concerning U.S. aggression. We should also heed the warnings reverberated from those we trust and need most concerning foreign policy — our allies.

UNL College Young Democrats