

Editorial

Equity study worth passing

A bill calling for a pay-equity study has again been proposed to the Nebraska Legislature.

Last year a similar proposal failed by a 19-23 vote. But this year, Nebraskans should urge their senators to support the study because it would benefit society, as well as women. Women currently earn only 64 cents for each dollar earned by men.

The pay-equity study would compare two dissimilar jobs and set salaries based on numerical ratings. For example, pay equity compares the duties of a secretary and a carpenter. The jobs are assigned points on factors such as effort, skill, responsibility and working conditions. If both jobs receive the same number of points, a secretary and a carpenter receive the same salary.

LB206, which was introduced Jan. 15, would establish a Pay Equity Steering Committee to oversee a study by an independent firm. The study would determine whether wages paid for men-dominated jobs are equal to those paid for comparable women-dominated jobs in state government.

The committee also would develop a long-range plan to correct pay inconsistencies.

The study, which is expected to cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000 over three years, would cover all state agencies, including the University of Nebraska.

In Nebraska, 75 percent of women government employees are massed into the 10 lowest-paying jobs — office and clerical work. At UNL, women also are massed into clerical fields, said Roy Loudon, administrator for personnel and risk management.

Of the 14 deans at UNL, only one is a woman. Hazel M. Anthony is dean of the College of Home Economics, a traditional women's field.

Of the top 10 executive officers (chancellor, assistant vice chancellor), only one is a woman.

Chancellor Martin A. Massengale recently appointed Janet Krause as acting vice chancellor of student affairs, making her the highest-ranking woman at UNL.

Suzanne Brown, assistant to the vice chancellor for student affairs and chairwoman of the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women, said a 1983-84 study by the commission showed that of 201 administrative positions, only 29 were filled by women.

UNL office and service jobs were evaluated by Robert Hayes and Associates in 1979. However, the Hayes Classification and Pay Plan discriminates against women.

For example, on a salary grade scale with one representing the least-skilled job and 13 the most skilled, a beginning staff secretary is rated fourth while a mason trainee is rated 10th. Thus, starting salary is \$6,785 for a staff secretary and \$9,713 for a mason trainee.

Licensed practical nurses are ranked ninth, while plumbers and pipefitters are ranked 12th. Thus, the starting salary is \$9,994 for a nurse and \$11,646 for a plumber.

The university, as well as the state, should encourage women to enter men-dominated jobs. But because the infiltration will be slow, Nebraskans should work for pay equity to help women and the state's economy as quickly as possible.

If pay equity were enforced in Nebraska, it would cost the state money. A Minnesota study found that pay equity increases would amount to between 2 and 4 percent of the total budgeted for state salaries.

But in the long run, pay equity would be cost effective. Pay equity would make better use of women in the economy. More women would enter the work force and would be motivated to work harder for better wages.

Job competition would increase, and employers would have more hiring choices.

If women were paid adequately, fewer single mothers would be on welfare programs.

Better wages also would attract more men to traditional "female" jobs and give both sexes a wider range of career opportunities.



Army's umbrella policy stirs soggy commentary

The Army has decided that real men don't carry umbrellas.

The ruling on this moist matter came last week when the Army Clothing and Equipment Board asked whether it wasn't time to allow men in uniform to come in out of the rain. They weren't talking about men in the trenches, mind you; they were talking about men on the bases or around the Pentagon.

Ellen Goodman

Well, the poor board must have been suffering an androgyny attack. They must have been reading too many articles about the new sensitive man and his overshoes.

In any case, the issue of the umbrella — to be or not to be dry — went all the way up to the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff. These are men whose pates haven't been touched by a raindrop since the invention of the chauffeur. Predictably and officially, they "disapproved." It was, we are told, a matter of image. As a source put it, they "feel the

image of male Army officers walking around with umbrellas is somehow intrinsically un-military."

This would just be more proof that the military is all wet, but I have learned not to take the messages wrapped in mufti so lightly. After all, the Army is a last preserve of real manhood, one of the last places where you are supposed to express your rank and suppress your feelings. It turns out that one of the feelings you are supposed to suppress is dampness.

According to the rules, it's all right for women in uniform to carry umbrellas. Nobody calls a woman a wimp. It's all right for Air Force men to carry umbrellas. The Air Force has been suspect ever since it allowed silk scarves. But brollies continue to be banned for Army, Navy and Marine men because it's an admission of weakness for them to be bothered by Mother Nature.

The whole silly thing reminds me of a recent piece in the Atlantic in which humorist Roy Blount tells about the time he almost got caught hanging diapers while in uniform: "Regulations prohibited doing such a thing without changing into fatigues or civilian clothes." Perhaps there is a dampness phobia going on here.

The image question isn't limited strictly to the military. It occurred to me, as I read the news story, that many civilian American men would rather be seen in public in his underwear than in his outerwear.

Do you remember the recent pictures from the Geneva negotiations? You could tell our guys from their guys by the headgear. The Soviets wore the ones with fur on their heads; the Americans were the ones with hair. At least some of them had hair.

The higher the ranks men aspire to in civilian life, the less clothing they are allowed to wear. Not since the term of John Kennedy has any president been photographed in a fedora. Caps, yes. Hardhats, yes. Cowboy hats, yes. A real live man's hat, no. At the other end of the body politic, we've seen a lot of Western boots. But when was the last time you saw a president in galoshes.

During the last campaign, the Democrat and the Republican men running for high office practically performed a striptease in the name of virility. Topcoats started disappearing along with gloves. Everyone seemed to want his portrait windblown against the elements. I had the sense that pretty soon we would be treated to chest hair on the train.

At the inauguration, contrary to rumors, the committee did not cancel the march because so many of the guests came with California in their veins. It was because the president couldn't appear in public with hat, mittens and a ski mask. As the man in the Pentagon said, it is a question of image.

The theory behind this male-itary image-making is inherited from the days when mad dogs and Englishmen went out in the mid-day sun. Now leaders and soldiers have to prove that rain drops will bounce off of true grit and never rust the metal of a tough guy.

Presumably if the Soviets were to see a satellite picture of American soldiers with umbrellas over their heads, tanks would roll across Eastern Europe. However, we expect them to be terrified by the vision of hundreds of soldiers with rain running down their cheeks.

What we have here is another chapter in the current strip-for-strength defense of our country. The first thing that our leaders take off is common sense. But at least the Army has its pride to keep it dry. © 1985, The Boston Globe Newspaper Company/Washington Post Writers Group

Will's book misses point 'Statecraft as Soulcraft' revives Burkean ideas

Several weeks ago I finally had an opportunity to peruse the contents of conservative columnist George Will's latest — and, so far, only — book, "Statecraft as Soulcraft." Will, a former political science professor, posited the goal of reviving the Burkean tradition within modern conservative thought through the book. I think he realized his goal, but the book is nonetheless ultimately disappointing.

Jim Rogers

The force of Will's pen is aimed at both the current ideas of modern liberalism as well as against the strong individualistic tendency of American conservatism. Against the latter he appropriately writes that "true conservatives have a soft spot in their hearts for organic collectivity." But I'm getting ahead of myself.

The essence of how Will understands the Burkean tradition in conservative thought is accurately captured by his title: "Statecraft as Soulcraft." His thesis is more forcefully articulated within the book as the proposition that statecraft is always soulcraft. By this curious turn of the phrase, Will attempts to communicate an idea almost completely lost upon the American mind because of its thorough inculcation in the 19th century liberal (i.e., utilitarian) notion that a sphere of neutrality exists in politics. Will's con-

trasting thought is namely that law is not neutral, but rather it in fact structures a community's vision of reality. Or to use Will's language, the notion is that the state is never "irrelevant" to the "inner lives" of its citizens.

The importance of Will's claim, if true, is difficult to underestimate. To the next that it is true, the structure of law and the institutionalized violence of the state is always employed as a means of directing the inner consciousness of its people. The question then facing the polity is never whether the state shall or shall not inculcate values into and celebrate the values of the dominant set of controllers, but rather which values are in fact to be inculcated. A pluralism without bounds, thus, is never, according to Will, ever even logically possible.

From this point, Will argues that the modern state, whether guided by modern liberals or egotistic conservatives is always employed in support of the baser aspects of the human race. Appetite, he argues, is considered a virtue, and the role of the modern state is viewed as that of merely supplying the demands of the human belly.

The unashamed facilitation of hedonism in politics, Will argues, has debased both the population and the state. In its stead, Will would see an explicit reaffirmation of the traditional Greek virtues as understood by Burke. Self control, moderation, strength and beauty, among others, comprise the list. A sense of belonging is felt by all members of the polity in Will's vision, and all citizens are given a stake in

the continued existence of the state. This is done through welfare payments to the poor if no other alternative is possible.

The substance of Will's normative vision is without a doubt the most disappointing aspect of the book. It is in his explicit use of the Greek concept that the state is the only legitimate purveyor of a normative or redemptive vision for the community that he fails.

For example, he writes of the state "abdicate[ing]" its responsibility for inculcating values to the church during the Middle Ages. By the use of this sort of language, Will demonstrates a fundamental insensitivity to the developing non-statist social consciousness among modern conservatives. He seems, lamentably, all too willing to allow the state — through its mechanisms of institutionalized violence — to be the lone determiner of the redemptive vision of a culture. Thus, completely neglecting any reference to alternative visions posited by insular minority communities within the polity.

Instead, as far as is possible, the structuring of reality through the "mediating" institutions of family, church and neighborhood should be facilitated. Because these institutions inculcate through affirmation — rather than through the destructive power of the state, a more peaceful and just society is insured over that which Will posits. Will seems to miss this point almost completely because of his wholesale commitment to Burke and thus misses perhaps the most exciting rediscovery extant in current conservative circles since the rediscovery of Burke.

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