

Editorial

Students can fight federal loan cuts

You will lose your federally insured student loan money if your family earns more than \$32,500 — even if there are five children that your family supports. You can help prevent the loss of that loan, and possibly the loss of your education.

President Reagan also has proposed a \$4,000 lid on financial aid for students and limiting Pell Grants to students with families earning less than \$25,000.

We think he's bargaining our future to buy bombs. The modest decrease in the deficit caused by domestic cuts will be offset by a 13 percent defense budget increase.

The problem could be even more acute for students from Nebraska farms. Not only will many lose their loan money, but their families will lose farm support money if Reagan's budget passes. Even if the family took out loans to pay for education, many would find it impossible to pay. For Nebraskans, Reagan's budget is like a pincer, crunching us from both sides.

You can help prevent the loss of that loan, farm supports, and possibly the loss of your education.

"Ha!" you say, disbelievers! Exercise your rights — stand up for your education.

Write your senators and congressmen addresses below). If you have more questions or would like to become more involved with the issue, call the Government Liaison Committee at 472-2652. They are enlisting help to fight against these short-sighted cuts.

Sen. J.J. Exon
330 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Sen. Edward Zorinsky
443 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Rep. Doug Bereuter
2446 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Rep. Virginia Smith
2202 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Rep. Hal Daub
1019 Longworth Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Meese unacceptable

The top law enforcement official in this country should be scrupulous, ethical, honest — almost beyond reproach. The job demands a "standard of excellence," said Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd of West Virginia.

"I don't think the nominee meets the standards for this office," Byrd said of Edwin Meese, who probably will be the new U.S. Attorney General.

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved his nomination with a 12-6 vote Tuesday over Byrd's objections. His nomination will now be forwarded to the full senate for approval.

We think Meese's standards are not those of a good attorney general. He certainly has not displayed a "standard of excellence." Meese has done nothing illegal — but judge for yourself whether or not you approve of this man who would be the highest enforcer of the nation's laws.

Meese took loans of \$60,000 from John R. McKean, a San Francisco accountant. Coincidentally, McKean was later appointed to the board of governors of the U.S. Postal Service.

Real-estate developer Thomas Barrack "contributed" \$70,000 to the purchase of Meese's California home, according to this week's Newsweek. Barrack later was appointed deputy under the Secretary of the Interior. Another strange coincidence.

When the Reagan Administration was moving into Washington, Meese took a \$10,000 payment from a presidential transition fund. When White House officials questioned the legality of the payment, Meese changed the designation of the money to "consulting fee" in his records.

We think those improprieties are unacceptable from a man who is to hold the office of Attorney General. Even if Meese has not broken the law, he has not shown the ethical standards befitting such a high office. The Senate should reject his nomination later this month.



THINGS WERE GOING GREAT UNTIL LEX LUTHOR HIT ME WITH A TEN MILLION DOLLAR VIGILANTE SUIT...

Office demands legal giant 'Mediocre' Meese wins president's confidence

The epiphany of Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) in the matter of Edwin Meese III occurred "just after lunch." After much agony, a little anguish, arguments with his staff and counseling from the lobbyists of Common Cause, it occurred to him that Meese was honest enough to be attorney general and ethical enough to be attorney general — but just barely. In an office that demanded a legal and ethical giant, Ed Meese managed only the minimal height requirement.



Richard Cohen

Not true, Meese responded. He had ethics and judgment in abundance — and, in the strange logic of Sen. Strom Thurmond, the lack of wealth to prove it. Appearances were just that — a string of coincidences, which when dusted by the special prosecutor for prints showed no wrongdoing. But then, as if remembering who he was, Meese put Biden and his lunch-hour revelation in his place: Who was he anyway to question the president of the United States?

"The president honored me by being the one who selected me for this position," he said. "The president revealed his confidence in me — not once, but on numerous occasions during the past year and again when he renominated me in this session of the Congress. Now if you have that respect for the president, I hope, as you think about this, you'll think about his judgment.

He also has the highest standards for attorney general and he feels that I'm qualified for it."

The response, which was no answer at all, showed Biden was onto something. The ultimate answer to the ultimate question in Washington is "the president wants me." In fact, that happens to be Meese's only qualification for the office — and it will be enough. The Senate might have the constitutional obligation to advise and consent, but in practice that's a phrase for movie titles and the musings of Archibald Cox.

The president almost always gets what the president wants and the president in this case wants Ed Meese. To question that is to get a secular version of the response the clergy often provides the skeptical: Who are they to question God? In this way the difficult questions get turned aside.

In the case of Meese, the questions are tough, but petty. They are about small matters — the appointment of faceless men to faceless boards. A promotion in the Army Reserves; a job on some board having to do with the post office; a loan in the nick of time. This is not Watergate, not Teapot Dome. The scandals are exceedingly small, but instructive. They suit the man.

This, of course, was Biden's point. Pressured to prove his bona fides as a presidential aspirant, the obvious occurred to Biden: Neither ethically nor legally is there anything grand about Meese. He is a mediocrity who's always just this side of the ethical divide, working the line with the aid of a selective memory and fancy

footwork.

He's nimble enough to get out of the way of meetings where his benefactors are discussed for presidential appointments. He knows when to speak up and when not to. He refused to look at memos that mentioned his Army promotion. In the manner of a Victorian hypocrite, he turns away lest he blush. Pray, do not speak of favors in the presence of Ed Meese.

Maybe Biden expected otherwise, but what did he think Ronald Reagan would serve up? After all, Meese is to replace William French Smith, a rich but otherwise undistinguished corporate lawyer whose term will be best remembered for miles traveled abroad. He comes to an office that has boasted attorneys general who diminish the term "hack" — men like Richard G. Kleindienst and John Mitchell.

As for Meese, he's the one who called the American Civil Liberties Union the "criminal's lobby," showing not that he disagreed with his fellow lawyers, but that he had utter contempt for them. Meese exhibited the subtlety of his mind: The accused are criminals and those who represent them are not lawyers doing their job, but cute lobbyists sneaking the guilty past the bar of justice. This from the man who will be the guardian of the Bill of Rights.

Joe Biden took the measure of Ed Meese and found him wanting. He wanted greatness, grandness — a soaring lawyer of stature. Instead, he got the man the president sent over. In reality, Meese was confirmed by the election. When you win big, you can think small.

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Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Weather material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not run, is left to the editor's discretion.

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Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names from publication will not be granted.

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