

Editorial

Policies, not looks make a governor

With Gov. Bob Kerrey getting closer to making public his decision on whether to run for a second term, controversial LB662 may prove to be an important issue standing in the way of his re-election. But why should it?

When Kerrey signed LB662 he was well aware that it could prove to be an unpopular decision. That he signed the bill before all its problems were worked out may have been a major factor placing some doubt in the public mind about Kerrey's decision making ability. But after a brief period of indecision, which included Kerrey almost calling a special session of legislature for the repeal of the bill, Kerrey has stuck to his decision and has announced that he would support LB662 as it stands.

There was some skepticism that these actions were an indication of Kerrey's own doubt of the feasibility of school consolidation, and some evidence may suggest that Kerrey's decision to stick to his original decision was based on him not wanting to undermine a petition already calling for LB662's repeal. But is any of this really the issue? Isn't it Nebraska's desire to have more than just an image-oriented leader in the statehouse the real concern?

It's a problem inherent to the entire political system of this nation when it becomes apparent that more than a fair share of politicians are voted into office on issues of image and incumbency rather than leadership. And with Kerrey's good looks, confidence and girlfriend, these issues are ever more present. But they should not be a problem.

When Gov. Kerrey mulled over the thought of LB662's unpopularity, his indecision may have made him appear a bit wishy-washy, but would we rather have a leader who is concerned about public opinion or one that doesn't take popular opinion into account when determining the feasibility of a bill? Surely LB662 is not an issue that would lead to the conclusion that Kerrey is all fluff and no substance.

In the coming year it will be important that Kerrey emphasize policy to assure the state that he will make a good leader for another four years if he decides to run. But it is equally important that the state be patient with our governor and avoid allowing shallow public opinion to persuade us.



New conservatism mirrors old New policies oriented toward 'social reality'

The rhetorical winds of conservatism are changing: A new social attitude is in the air. The new conservatism, however, is really the very old. On the one hand it still distinguishes itself as against the liberal defenders of a vast and burgeoning civil structure, yet more importantly, the new conservatives distinguish themselves also as against the barren civil minimalism which has been the dominant conservative vision (or, more accurately, anti-vision) for the state since the civil war.

Politically, conservatism is abhorrent of policy catastrophe; that is, the will of revolutionaries (both of the left and the right) to make a

Similarly, more secular commentators such as George Will have argued for social support systems. Actually, he's quite willing to call his program a system, but it is quite a different

clean sweep of the snail matter of the status quo and set up the new edifice upon the ashes of the old. These revolutionaries are not wild-eyed youth, but rather the ideological radicals currently seated in government who are unwilling to engage in the difficult process of statecraft, but opt for the easy policy path of catastrophic or wholesale rather than incremental change.

manifestation than the current horrendous cultural albatross generally known as welfare. He locates the root of his advocacy in the continuing national need for social cohesion as well as the need for conservatives to maintain a pragmatic policy orientation in order to avoid becoming irrelevant to the policy process. This pragmatism does not require the conservative to give up his or her unique vision of good government, but simply to recognize that only so much is politically feasible at one time — against employing a sort of weaning metaphor.

Examples of this shift, abound. For example, one theologian associated with the Christian right argues in a recently published book that revolutionary diminutions in the amount of social welfare is immoral unless non-statist mediating social structures (such as families, churches and community programs) are in place to pad the impact of the change. The policy metaphor is one of a gradual weaning of culture away from welfare dependence — a dependence which none of these conservatives doubt has

American conservatives have aptly come to recognize, as Benjamin Disraeli, that "protection is not a principle, but an expedient." This new pragmatism — one guided by the basic sensibilities of traditional conservatism can do little but help the American political process as we approach the time of hard choices which must, believe, inevitably follow the current remarkably peaceful political era of the Reagan administration.

pathetically twisted the potential for civil virtue within the American character.

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Jim Rogers

What the new ideology (which probably, as Russell Kirk emphasizes, really is not an ideology, but more of a method or perhaps even more accurately, a normative aesthetic vision) recognizes over the old, is that apart from the systematic demands of philosophical commitment, there exists a very real social reality which must be engaged in order to articulate and implement just and humane policy.

The Nebraskan

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Support urged for ASUN bill

This is 1985, not 1958 — yet it's hard to believe that the members of our student government know that.

Last spring, with a week of school left, they passed bylaws doing away with discrimination in ASUN and student organizations. This 'non-discrimination' bill was a bold step for ASUN: they didn't outlaw slavery until 1965.

So what happens? The bill is vetoed by President Keating, the day before school gets over. His reasons? Too specific — it lists "discriminated-against" minorities such as place of residence (Gerard, that means dorms, off-campus, or Greek units), and sexual orientation (gays), and color, and creed, and religious beliefs (ie, 'traditional' minorities).

How can discrimination be too specific? When

is a minority too small? ...when they are eliminated?

Let's remember that people are people (thanks, Depeche Mode). Membership or appointments should be based on a person's ability to do the job — that's all. Every person should have an equal chance to succeed.

During the first days of this school year, the ASUN Senate will attempt to override this veto. If you are concerned (and you should be, lest you be blacklisted too!), please contact your college's ASUN Senator(s). Don't know them? Give the ASUN office a call (2-2581); they will pass the message along.

Let's hope that this override passes Student Senate with the same resounding vote that the original bill did.

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Letters

Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

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

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.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.