

Editorial

Income tax increase most feasible answer

Gov. Bob Kerrey's decision to allow the Legislature to increase state income taxes during its special session should lift the morale of NU students and faculty.

An income tax increase is the most fair and feasible way to overcome the state's budget shortfall. Nebraskans who make no income would not have to pay the added tax, and those who are better off could afford the increase.

In reality, a tax increase would not ask more of Nebraskans. The state tax system is based on the federal income tax system, and state revenues have dropped during the last three years because President Ronald Reagan reduced federal income taxes.

Nebraskans actually are paying a smaller percentage of their income to state taxes than in previous years. According to the 1984 Economic Report, federal income tax has been reduced 23 percent during the last three years.

Thus, according to figures gathered by Gary Schwendiman, UNL dean of the College of Business Administration, Nebraskans should be paying 24 percent in federal tax bills to the state in order to maintain the same real tax of 1981. Nebraskans currently pay 19 percent of their federal income tax to the state.

Despite the agriculture crisis, Nebraska is not a poor state. Only 7 percent of the state's income tax revenue comes from farmers and ranchers.

Personal income in Nebraska increased 10 percent from 1983 to 1984. Nebraska also led the nation in personal income growth from June 1984 to June 1985.

In 1984, Nebraska was 23rd among the states in per capita personal income. Yet in per capita state taxes, Nebraska ranked 37th.

To avoid future budget shortfalls because of federal income tax changes, state legislators should divorce state tax rates from the federal tax system.

When the income tax revenues fluctuate and are unreliable, the entire state suffers. Money, time and resources are wasted because legislators must hold special sessions to haggle over the budget shortfalls.

An independent income tax system could provide more stability for the state and give universities, colleges and state services the support they deserve.



...THE SECURITY AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION JUMPS



Quality without funding

It's possible through faculty, student cooperation

I have never been fond of measuring units. You know, the kind that confused us all through physics and chemistry, those wonderful formula courses. Just when I thought I had a grasp on the foot-pound per second, someone would sadistically ask for the metric equivalent.

My main problem with these unit labels, however, is that they are presented as being set-in-stone, so objective and exact that one should not question them. There is one currently flying at me from all directions to which I object: I am fed up with being told that the standard unit of measurement for educational excellence are dollars and cents.

Joe Schuele

I may be naively idealistic, or perhaps just blinded by a hatred for tax increases, but I don't swallow the notion that educational quality automatically suffers (or improves) according to its budget allocation.

Why label an instructor "mediocre" on the basis of salary, or declare that a program pales in comparison with that of other institutions simply because it operates on a tighter budget?

Now that student interest has been aroused, we should look at ways of maintaining our university other than further burdening the Nebraska taxpayer, who, in case you hadn't noticed, is not enjoying the best of times.

Why is it so unthinkable that, with proper effort, we could keep a quality faculty in spite of a conservative salary and benefit scale? If instructors show up every morning in order to reap big dollars, I must say that they made a poor career choice. Is it impossible that faculty moving on to greener pastures can be adequately replaced? We should be selective in using the label of indispensability in education or any aspect of society, for those that warrant it are few and far between.

A number game does not represent the total question here. A great portion of the "excellence" we are striving for could be measured by our efforts to overcome financial adversity. Maybe it is time we stopped our full-lipped pout and took constructive measures toward preserving the quality of our university. After all, we need not equate "I support NU" with "Let's bleed the taxpayers dry."

Surely there are departments that could use voluntary assistance. That strikes me as a more productive use of

one's energy than organizing a "wear blue" campaign. Perhaps faculty and students could put their heads together to find ways to operate programs more efficiently, rather than rely on the generic, end-of-semester evaluation sheets.

A more familiar answer may be that students will need to take on extra working hours to face another tuition increase. I realize many students already perform a remarkable balancing act between work, school, and, in many cases, family care. But we should not think that this type of struggle is restricted to students. It extends to many others in our state as well.

Nor should we take the attitude that such an extra effort is indicative of a flaw in our system. It represents a mark of excellence in its own right, and seldom goes unrewarded.

All of this is not to say that the difficulties of our state and our educational system can be taken lightly, for they demand the attention and input of a great many people. But when we look for ways to channel that input, we should keep in mind that this situation calls for a shoulder to the wheel, not just an outstretched palm.

Schuele is a UNL senior advertising major.

Pro-life attack of Title X program hinders right to family planning

If you made a mistake and studied logic as a child instead of politics, you probably assume that a foe of abortion is a fan of family planning. After all, you reason, the best way to deal with an unwanted pregnancy is to prevent it.



Ellen Goodman

Under this cloud of logic, you probably even assume universal support for Title X. That federal program funds family planning, serves some five million women a year, prevents some 800,000 unwanted pregnancies and some 400,000 abortions every year.

The reality, however — the political reality — is that Title X is under strenuous attack by those who insist that a vote for the family-planning program is a vote for abortion. Remember Voodoo Economics? What we have here is Voodoo Biology.

The way the law currently is written, no Title X money can be used for abor-

tions. But that isn't enough for the pro-life crowd. They insist that the money is nevertheless "tainted." What they call for is a "wall of separation" between birth control and abortion.

In blissful harmony, Sen. Orrin Hatch and Rep. Jack Kemp have offered identical amendments to Title X, and the White House has chimed in with its approval. They propose that if Title X is continued beyond the Nov. 14 deadline, no federal funding could be used for abortion counseling or referrals. Nor could federal money go to a group, clinic or hospital that performed abortions with its own funds.

This is the first time that Kemp has taken such a lead role on a conservative "social issue." He appears to be priming his right wing for the flight of 1988. The pressure, however, comes from restless pro-lifers who have gotten very little from the Reagan administration. Their strategy has changed from trying to make abortion illegal to trying to make it impossible. This is their most direct attack yet on birth control.

In real life, as opposed to politics, no medically ethical doctor or clinic can refuse to tell a patient the full range of medical options. Whether a woman has a ruptured appendix or an unwanted

pregnancy, she has the equal right to information about treatment. She must give informed consent. Any clinic that took federal money promising that its doctors would never utter the word "abortion" could lose that money in a malpractice suit. Such a "gag" rule is also unconstitutional.

What of the amendment to deny birth-control money to groups who offer abortions under the same roof or mast-head? Most abortions are performed in hospitals. Faced with a choice, most hospitals could not stop performing a legal, medical procedure. They would stop doing family planning.

A prime target of Title X shooting match is Planned Parenthood. The group gets \$30 million of the \$142 million in Title X money and is a vocal enough pro-choice group to raise the hackles of Hatch-Kemp folk. But Planned Parenthood, a well-funded private organization, would be hurt less by the demise of Title X than the small health departments and neighborhood clinics that service the poor.

"It's pure insanity," says Faye Watleton, president of Planned Parenthood. "Half of the six million pregnancies in this country are unintentional.

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