

Editorial

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Easy money? Lottery can help NU

Wanted: An inexpensive way to support NU without huge tax increases. Possible solution: A statewide lottery.

Sen. John DeCamp of Neligh, a long-time advocate of lotteries, again has introduced a constitutional amendment to establish a lottery. If senators approve the idea, they should set up the lottery so that NU can reap part of the benefits. One-third of the state's would-be lottery proceeds could translate into hundreds of thousands of dollars for NU.

In the last three years, NU budgets have been cut 3 percent, 2.5 percent and 2 percent. Those cuts have caused serious problems.

● Last year's budget cuts forced UNL to cancel more than 40 class sections.

● UNL's Love Library was ranked last among 11 peer-group schools. The low rating was caused by sagging budgets for staff and materials.

● Nearly 40 administrative jobs have been eliminated because of budget cuts.

A lottery could help NU reverse the downward trend.

More and more states have turned to lotteries. About 20 of them have or are planning a lottery. Most of the lotteries are highly successful.

Larger-populated states, such as New Jersey and New York, have raised nearly \$800 million in previous lotteries, a Newsweek article said. Even smaller states, such as Colorado, have made more than \$100 million.

The idea of using a lottery to finance education is not new. In colonial days, states used money

from lotteries to help build some of the country's first universities. Lottery proceeds today often are earmarked to specific programs, such as the arts and conservation.

Opponents say they don't like lotteries because they reflect state support of legalized gambling. Some even say lotteries provoke big gambling operations. Newsweek reported that in some eastern states, operators use numbers identical to the state-sponsored lotteries, but tie larger purses to the winnings.

Lottery opponents also claim a lottery would provoke people to spend money they don't have.

But some studies show that lotteries don't prey on the poor. A state-sponsored study in Arizona shows that lottery players in that state predominantly are white, 36-year-old men with a household income of about \$20,000. Not exactly a poverty-stricken group.

Timing is right for a lottery. Nebraska senators can look east to Iowa for an example of how to set up a lottery in a Midwestern state. Carol Custer of the Iowa Lottery Office says senators had trouble estimating lottery sales because it was the first smaller-populated state to start a lottery.

A lottery is a form of voluntary taxation in which only those who want to participate have to pay. When someone buys a ticket, while part of that money will go toward paying the large cash prizes and operation of the lottery, a big part of it will benefit the buyer through improved parks or improved education.

Bill forces cuts

Gramm-Rudman may actually work

The determination of Congress and the U.S. people to balance the budget will soon be tested. Unless ruled unconstitutional, the Gramm-Rudman balanced budget bill automatically will cut \$11.7 billion from the 1986 federal budget March 1.

While Gramm-Rudman seems to be the only way that Congress can realistically circumvent the myriad of special interest groups out to protect their "piece of the pie" (leading to greater and greater deficits), many commentators lament the necessary cut in congressional decision-making power.

The bill gave the General Accounting Office the final say on the budget cuts that must be made if the year's deficit ceiling, as set by the bill, is exceeded by \$20 billion or more. This year's target is \$172 billion — meaning that \$48 billion must be cut from the budget for fiscal year 1986. The bill requires smaller deficits each succeeding year until 1991, when the budget is required to be balanced.

The bill is a classic case of passing the buck. But if it just happens to work over the next five years, and the budget actu-

ally is balanced as a result, the public undoubtedly will see a long line of Congressmen claiming responsibility for the success.

On the other hand, the bill protects Congress from the strong political fallout that is expected to follow any implementation of the law. At the least, the next few years may be some of the most politically interesting in a long time. If Congress doesn't raise taxes to decrease the deficit, Gramm-Rudman will accomplish the most significant governmental restructuring since the New Deal.

But then, the whole experiment might be cut short by challenges to the provision's constitutionality. The legal question revolves around whether the accounting office is part of the legislative or executive branch of the federal government.

If the accounting office is part of the legislative branch, then its "final" list of specific cuts can't bind Congress. But if it is part of the executive branch, then its final decisions would be binding.

A ruling on the law probably will be out before the first mandatory cuts on March 1. In the meantime, stay tuned...

Unborn need benefit of doubt

Failure to protect innocents shows lack of civilization

I'll just have to save him. Because, after all, a person's a person no matter how small.

*Dr. Seuss, Horton Hears a Who
Deliver those who are being taken away to death, And those who are staggering to slaughter, O hold them back.*

If you say, "See, we did not know this," Does not He consider it who weighs the hearts? And will He not render to man according to his work?

Proverbs 24:11-12

Today is the 13th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision that resulted in the widespread legalization of abortion.

At the heart of the pro-life position is a fundamental claim of justice: That innocents should be protected from aggression. To the extent that the state doesn't prohibit attacks upon innocents, to that extent it doesn't adequately discharge its fundamental reason for existence and is, thus, a perverse and deformed state.

Some deny that the claims of justice reach into the womb to protect the innocent within from an abortion-inflicted death. I used to be one of those persons.

But now I think, the weight of the argument is on the side of those who oppose legalized abortion on demand. If contrary thinkers will reflect more closely upon the arguments of the matter, they too will realize that only the pro-life position is consistent with any civilized notion of justice. Below are some of the more popular arguments in favor of legalized abortion.

Argument One: Since we don't know when a fetus becomes a person, it is premature to make killing of a fetus illegal.

This is a popular and important argument. In a recent Newsweek editorial, Professor Charles Kelbley argued that any doubt as to whether the fetus is a person means that we should resolve the issue against the fetus and permit abortions. This is

essentially the same argument that Justice Harry Blackmun used in the Roe v. Wade decision.

But common sense tells us that, given the magnitude of the error if we are in fact wrong (namely about 1.5 million deaths every year at current rates), we should give the fetus the benefit of the doubt. Civilized society certainly makes similar presumptions in other contexts.

Our doubts about the fetus can only be resolved in favor of the fetus. Certainly if we wait long enough to see what appears in the end, we view a person. The fetus deserves the benefit of the doubt.

Beyond this, it is obvious that all homo sapiens should be considered legal persons. And there is no question that a fetus is in fact a homo sapien.



Jim Rogers

For law to stand logically in the end, as Berkeley Law Professor John Noonan points out, all members of the human species must enjoy the protection of law.

Argument Two: Abortion is a matter of choice for women.

The nature of law is to restrict unjust choices. The law says that I cannot choose to rob, shout "fire" in a crowded theater — or take someone's life.

The majority opinion in Roe v. Wade similarly granted that if "the fetus is a 'person' within the language and meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment," then the "case" in favor of legalized abortion "collapses, for the fetus' right to life is then guaranteed specifically by the (Fourteenth) Amendment."

We cannot justly choose death for an innocent person. Regardless of the attempts to rhetorically cleanse the abortion procedure, it is nonetheless a

form of homicide.

Argument Three: Unaborted children will be forced upon unwilling parents, who consequently will abuse them.

First, no statistical relationship exists between desire for a child during pregnancy and behavior toward the child after birth. Many who want children end up abusing them, and many who initially didn't want children but have them anyway end up being excellent, loving parents.

Second, the numbers of abortions and the instances of child abuse both have increased during the last decade, a decade of legalized abortion. Given the huge number of abortions performed during this period, people would have expected that if abortion proponents' claims were true, the destruction of so many would-be abused children would have significantly decreased the rate of child abuse.

Third, and most obviously, the argument is utterly absurd given a moment's reflection.

If a man were to be hauled into court on the charge of murdering his wife, he would be laughed to a conviction if he defended his action on the basis that "If I hadn't killed her, I might have abused her."

When people use that defense to justify abortions, it is scarcely less ludicrous.

Argument Four: Laws restricting abortion violate the principle of the separation of church and state.

In the case of Harris v. McRae, which upholds the legality of the Hyde Amendment's limit on federal funding for abortions under Medicaid, the Supreme Court squarely and reasonably put this argument to rest.

The court rejected the claim that the Hyde Amendment be struck down for violating the Establishment Clause because "it incorporates into law the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church."

See ROGERS on 5

Whether to prevent illness or hell, proposed excise taxes are sin taxes

There was a time when we used to call them "sin taxes." In that earlier and moralistic age, the government was encouraged to punish smokers and drinkers for their sins by slapping them with a stiff excise tax.

This national pay-as-you-go-to-hell program lasted well into the mid-20th century with time out for Prohibition. Then, gradually, sin began to go out of fashion. Today, smoking is no longer the hallmark of a loose woman except in retrospective Virginia Slims ads. Not even the Salvation Army describes alcoholics as sinners anymore.

But there is a movement in the land to raise up the excise taxes from the half-dead. One coalition of groups is lobbying to tax cigarettes at a higher rate, and now another wants to up the federal ante on alcohol.

This time they aren't crusading to tax people for the sake of their souls. They are campaigning to save their bodies. Last week, the National Alcohol Tax Coalition — one part Women's Christian Temperance Union, 10 parts medical establishment — introduced its plan. It is not, they insist, the same "old-fashioned 'sin taxes.'" Their hopes are labeled "health taxes."

The coalition makes a good case for an alcohol tax increase on purely economic grounds. Doubling the tax on hard alcohol would restore it to 1974 levels, when you adjust the value of the dollar. Their other proposal would tax the alcoholic content of beer and wine so that it would be on par with hard liquor. They estimate that the whole thing would bring in \$12 billion a year to cut the deficit.

But the motive is more subtle than the price tag. The modern demon in rum is its health effects. The alcohol

taxers hope, as do the cigarette taxers, that raising the costs will lower the consumption, especially by the young.

As Michael Jacobson, head of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, says up-front: "We're interested in reducing drinking, not stopping drinking. We're not teetotalers, but we want to promote the public health while raising tax revenues."



Ellen Goodman

Well, I support this argument and these new taxes. But I can't help noticing the shifting grounds on which the new argument rests. Today we are less likely to apply a moral measure to human behavior than a health measure. We have switched from damnation-prevention programs to sickness prevention.

It is particularly true of smoking and drinking, but not exclusively. When was the last time that anyone accused an overweight friend of the sin of gluttony? We may talk about willpower, the bakery may name its best-selling dessert "Chocolate Sin," but it's the rare person who says that being fat is being bad. We say, albeit piously, that it's bad for you.

Nor is sloth any longer a sin against God. It has become a crime against your heart vessels. We no longer win or lose points for the life in the hereafter but for extending the here and now. The new chosen people are those who rate high on the cardiovascular fit-

parade charts.

Even premarital sex has undergone a slight shift. Once we believed that God would punish those who committed the act. Now many Americans are less anxious about the immorality than about catching a sexually transmitted disease.

I suppose that some of this is the fallout of psychology. As good modern psychobabblers, we talk less about right and wrong and more about healthy and sick behavior. If some acts are condemned on public-health grounds, others are justified as "good for you." Screaming, for example, has been described as a "healthy outlet" for anger. Marrying a younger (presumably, second) wife, was identified by one researcher as an aid to a longer (presumably, male) life.

I have strayed a bit from smoking and drinking, but not onto altogether foreign turf. By all means, we should raise the taxes on smoking. Raise them on drinking. If the young get hit in the purse or pocketbook, they may not get hit later in the liver or lung. Let the heaviest users make their contribution to the national debt on the way to the doctor.

But don't try to change the name of the tax. Smoking may be described as an addiction and alcoholism as a disease. But these are still "sin taxes." It's just that we've changed the nature of sin. The unforgivable misbehavior of contemporary life is whatever makes us sick. In the modern United States, illness is hell.

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