

# Editorial

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## Budget trouble Eroding taxes a problem

Gov. Bob Kerrey ignored the cause of the state's budget troubles when he criticized NU administrators for their frank comments on the university budget.

Kerrey responded to comments made during the Legislative Appropriations Committee hearing, when some NU officials said the quality of NU rests on legislators' shoulders.

Instead, Kerrey said, NU's problems stem from the state's troubled economy and an increasing student enrollment.

Not exactly. Kerrey and state legislators should realize that NU's budget problems — and the state's money shortfall — stem from an eroding tax base. Nebraska's system is based on the federal tax rate, which has been reduced 23 percent in the last three years.

Thus, Nebraskans should be paying 24 percent of their federal tax bills to the state to maintain the same real tax rate of 1981. Currently, Nebraskans pay 19 percent of their federal tax rate to the state.

NU administrators have a right

to blame the Legislature for NU's problems. Perhaps they also should blame Kerrey.

Kerrey and state legislators should lead the charge for higher state taxes or a divorce from the federal tax system, so Nebraska's revenue would not fluctuate with federal changes.

But neither Kerrey nor state senators have told the state this needs to be done. They insist on cutting the budget to unreasonable levels, harming the constituents they pretend to save.

Finally, Kerrey's statement that the negative aspects of NU are overplayed was ironic.

Kerrey encouraged NU to "focus on the things we are doing right... We should have pride instead of feeling blue."

Yet, when President Reagan did exactly that in his State of the Union address, Kerrey denounced him as living in a fantasy world and compared him to pro wrestler Hulk Hogan, who gives inspiring but unrealistic performances.

Apparently, opinions change when one is pinned to the mat.

## NASA is priority Agency is pressured by business

Everyone seems to want to point a finger at one particular person or entity to place the blame for last month's space shuttle disaster.

But before any accusations are made, officials investigating the shuttle tragedy need to consider one thing: NASA and its space programs, including the shuttle, are under constant pressure from the government and big businesses that have a financial interest in the space program. That pressure leads to quick, panicked action.

Investigators have discovered that workers associated with the shuttle's booster — the part presumably responsible for the explosion — warned their managers that the shuttle shouldn't be launched in Florida's low temperatures that day. Managers ignored the pleas and gave NASA the go-ahead for launching. The decision to override educated warnings stands as proof of the pressure NASA faces to continually get its shuttles into the air.

Congress, which controls NASA's purse strings, appears to expect too much from the space program. The lawmakers want to see some short-term benefits. They expect the program to make money, to be efficient and productive.

Such expectations are ludicrous. All space exploration is designed for the future. Any research today won't benefit Amer-

icans now, but those in future centuries. Congress appropriates billions of dollars to the space program and expects some material gains. That is unfortunate.

NASA evidently feels this pinch, and therefore jumps the gun in getting projects underway.

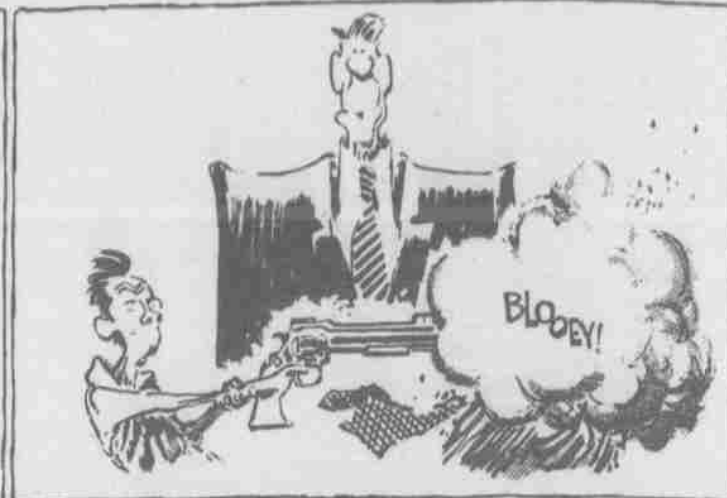
Also, businesses associated with the space program could tend to pressure NASA into projects and flights it might not be prepared for. NASA launches satellites for several corporations as well as test materials on the shuttles.

The shuttle disaster unfortunately occurred at the same time Congress began making its budget decisions for the next year. The fate of NASA's budget is undetermined.

Because space exploration is an important investment for this country, Congress shouldn't spend any time deliberating NASA's budget. Congress needs to automatically appropriate a specified amount every year, giving the program the guarantee that its budget will not be cut.

Otherwise, NASA will continue to feel the economic pinch. It will continue to buckle under pressure from businesses with money invested in the space program.

They might not listen to manufacturers of the shuttle's boosters next time when they warn against a possibly dangerous and fatal launch.



## If legislators can't hear reason, maybe they'll listen to Gipper

NU administrators, students and regents have reasoned, cajoled and warned legislators about the consequences of further budget cuts. But, last year, senators cut the budget anyway.

University advocates told them a strong university builds the economy, keeps young people in the state and prepares the population for the future. They told legislators that faculty members were leaving for better pay, that the brightest students were going out of state for higher education. All to no avail.

This year, like the punch line to a bad joke, Nebraska coach Tom Osborne came along to the Capitol to testify.

He told legislators that budget cuts have impeded his recruiting and made it difficult for some players to make it to practice because of scheduling conflicts. Potential Cornhuskers would rather go to Iowa or Kansas, where taxpayers are willing to pay for quality education as well as quality football. Osborne reasoned that if his players are suffering, everyone else at NU is, too.

Don't mistake me; I'm glad he went. He is, sadly and ironically, the most influential and well-known man at this university. Legislators probably woke up long enough to hear what he said. One even asked if Osborne would prom-

ise to beat Oklahoma next season if the budget isn't cut.

All of us here for intellectual stimulation thought that was really funny. Hardy-har-har, as they say in the cartoons.

But I'm not picky; if senators won't listen to reason, maybe, just maybe, they'll listen to the Gipper.

There is nothing as intimately my own as my life. To be sure, I have responsibilities to others: friendships, loves, obligations for work. Ultimately, though, what I do or don't do with my life is up to me.



Chris Welsch

Along with the right to live my life the way I chose, I should have the right to die the way I chose.

The Legislature is considering a bill that would legally recognize a patient's "right to die." It would honor requests for the withholding or withdrawing of life-support for those with terminal conditions. The bill, LB754, would recognize what is popularly called the

"Living Will."

A "Living Will" is a statement signed and witnessed by a person still in sound health who wants to guarantee that if he is incapacitated and recovery is out of the question, he will be allowed to die with dignity.

If you have cancer or are in a traumatic car accident, and your brain is dead or you are in an irreversible coma, the doctors would legally be free to "pull the plug." To me, existence without human interaction, without a mind, existence supported only by machines and tubes, is worse than death. It is life without dignity.

A "Living Will" does not abrogate the duty of the doctor to do his utmost to save a life. Nor does it impinge upon the rights of others. It allows the person who writes one to make a decision about how he will die.

Anyone who finds the idea repugnant for religious or ethical reasons need not have one.

LB754 deserves passage, even with the enormous welcome of important legislation in this session. At least 10 other states have passed similar bills into law. LB754 would guarantee a right that would give many Nebraskans more comfortable lives and dignified deaths.

Welsch is a senior journalism and English major and a Daily Nebraskan copy desk chief.

## Philippine election results illustrate president's knee-jerk conservatism

Picture Ronald Reagan. OK, now picture him as a giant knee. Now here comes a doctor's rubber-tipped hammer shaped like the Philippines. The hammer hits, the knee jerks and the president immediately comes down on the side of authority. The president is the genuine article. He really is a knee-jerk conservative.

Since Reagan's initial statement about the Philippine elections, there has been some backing and filling, some hemming and hawing and the required dispatch of Philip Habib, the winged messenger of futility, on yet another dumb mission. But at the critical, almost Rorschach moment, the president looked at the ink blot of the Philippine archipelago and saw the Berkeley campus of yore — protest and pandemonium. As the kids say, he freaked.

Of course, Reagan could hardly mention Berkeley. After all, he was not articulating a thought, but an emotion — what in Washington passes for ideology. That strongly felt emotion prompted the nonsense that leaped from Reagan's lips when the issue of the Philippines was raised at his recent press conference: No proof of vote fraud

existed and, besides, both sides had used violence.

The average American, lacking a Habib but having a TV set, knew the president was wrong. The bodies bled on camera and the fraud was palpable. Richard Lugar, a conservative senator from Indiana and once a favorite of former president Richard Nixon, had certified it. Ferdinand Marcos was a cheat.



Richard Cohen

Notice that Reagan's statements regarding the Philippine elections were not all that different from those he made regarding South Africa. There, too, he said that there was violence on both sides. It seemed not to matter to him that one side was the government, with all its guns, and the other side, while numerous, was powerless. It seemed also not to matter that the government was protecting privilege,

racism and the raw abuse of power. What only mattered was that it was the government — authority. It had to be right.

For Reagan, this is a theme. At the same news conference at which he inarticulately articulated his position on the Philippine election, he defended his record on civil rights: "I was doing things about civil rights before there was (a government) program." Maybe he was. But when the individual efforts of countless individual blacks converged into an often rambunctious civil-rights movement, Reagan recoiled and opposed civil-rights legislation.

In the end, facts and reality sometimes overpower Reagan's conservative instincts and, almost imperceptibly, things change. U.S. policy towards South Africa is not what it once was — although to many blacks there it hardly matters. When it comes to the Philippines, something similar will happen. In due course, Reagan will inch away from his initial rhetoric and policy will dutifully follow. Trouble is, it may hardly matter.

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