

**opinion**  
READER

# Letters examine fetus' life, student's death

## Student defends socialized medicine

As a native of a country that has socialized health care, I thought I would take a few moments to correct some of the more blatant inaccuracies in Dave Clare's letter (Daily Nebraskan, Dec. 9) attacking that particular institution.

First, your figures on income tax are wildly inaccurate. Basic rate tax in the United Kingdom (note -- not England) is 28 percent and the highest tax rates in Europe are levied by the Swedes, around 50 percent.

More importantly, the major problem with your argument stems from your assumption that the only type of health care available in these countries is government care.

This may be true in the Eastern Bloc, but it is not true of Western Europe. In all the Western European countries, private health care and private health insurance are widely available. In the government sector, resources are allocated according to greatest need; so yes, there are restrictions on care and often long-waiting lists for non-emergency treatment.

However, anyone who has the resources can go into the private sector and get any treatment they wish, at their convenience. That seems to me like the best of both worlds:

If you are poor you don't have to rely on charity to get treatment, or worse yet, die for lack of it.

If you are rich (or even moderately well off) you can get your choice of care. Allocating resources according to ability to pay, as occurs in the United States, is not only inhumane but also inefficient. Urgent needs such as pre-natal care in inner-cities go unmet, while trivial "needs" such as cosmetic surgery take up vast amounts of medical resources. Is that a fair and just system?

Finally, for a country that has the "best" health care in the world, the United States also has one of the highest infant mortality rates of any industrialized nation. I fail to see how anyone could be proud of that. However, I could be wrong, after all, I'm addressing someone who wrote off 26 million people as unimportant.

Fiona M. Davidson  
graduate student  
geography

## Location of fetus makes no difference

This is in response to Darcy Horn's letter (DN, Dec. 13). Horn stated that "at the point when a fetus is in the womb, it is not a 'who' but a fetus."

I take this "not a who" to mean it is not a person. How asinine. Unless you misstated your thoughts, you are telling me that as long as a baby is inside the mother, killing it can be justified because it is not a person.

Do you base this on just location? Why would the location of a human-like organism have relevance as to whether it's a person or not? Does it have something to do with receiving nutrition from the mother? Babies die without nutrition no matter what.

Surely this (location) must not be what you think determines whether something is a person or not. So then is it size? Or does it have something to do with brain waves or response to stimuli? First trimester babies have these capabilities. There must be something you think is different between a newborn and a fetus at three months of development, although physiologically, there is really just an increase in size that occurs. If you can't think of anything, I think you are avoiding the issue.

And please don't state blindly and glibly that "a woman has a right to do

whatever she wants with her body." I believe in this statement too, as long as they're not killing someone.

I do not have to be a woman to be upset about murder and seek laws against it. I don't have to be black to stand up for civil rights.

Also, I said after the first trimester a fetus just increases in size, not 10 weeks like you said I said in your letter. But what's the difference?

John Campbell  
senior  
pre-vet

## Dorm polling place would show concern

I am writing to voice my support for locating Association Students of the University of Nebraska polling places in the residence halls. In his letter, Brian Svoboda (DN, Dec. 12) brought out the point that a major platform issue of the current ASUN executives was getting apathetic students involved. Svoboda also recognized that the way to get more students voting is to make it easier to do so. I think another crucial issue is the attitude the locations would exhibit.

I lived in Abel Hall for five years and served on the Abel/Sandoz Residents' Association. Residence hall people feel they have been ignored by ASUN. Most residents see ASUN as greek-run and greek-oriented. By locating polling places in the residence halls, ASUN would be exhibiting their concern with residence hall issues. Denying the locations would undoubtedly be seen by many as affirmation of the stereotype.

In any governing system, people must feel they are an acknowledged and desirable part of the system before their participation and support can be expected. I think the current proposal would go far in promoting that goal.

Tim Texel  
first-year law student

## Reaction to death showed concern

Part of the training we do with the student assistants each year involves teaching them to say residence halls instead of "dormitories or dorms." Recently the difference between the two terms became starkly real to me.

On Dec. 8, I was the RD on duty for the Harper-Schramm-Smith residence hall complex. I received the call concerning the death of Roger Dartmann. The process was handled delicately and professionally which illustrates precisely why these buildings are different than dorms.

First, it was a neighbor who alerted the student assistant. When the incident was reported, there were no crowds of strangers to push back from the scene attempting to catch a glimpse of the happening. The halls had been cleared and concerned residents respected the wishes of the student assistants in giving the police the space they needed and Dartmann the reverence and privacy he deserved.

These residents cared for more than the gossipy news or the excitement of the incident. These residents were close, they were friends, they had a leader who quietly cleared the halls and answered their questions. They were driven by a cooperative community effort. They were not the individuals of a "dormitory." They were and continue to be a community where the needs and concerns of the one affect the whole group.

In addition, the resources available to that community were manifold. Immediately, there were police on the scene, professional staff and other concerned staff of the building. Each had a role to play and each performed gracefully. Soon, there were people available for the people who were effected deeply by the death. There were two ministers and a representative from mental health

who came to reach those needs of that community.

As I observed the event unfold, I realized the difference we try to make in the building in order to create that sense of community. Suddenly, I felt proud of all that we stand for. I saw Dartmann's friends suffer his loss which was very difficult; but, I also saw how efforts were made for them to join together and unite in a way a floor only can after they know each other so well.

I saw a quiet crowd of people. A strong group of caring persons who revere life and believe in all that it can be. I saw difficult questions being posed and answers being formulated and shared with each other. I saw a floor meeting formed in order to pay tribute to Dartmann and the effect he had in achieving the community on Harper 2. Strangely, his effect will live on even in the presence of death. His memory will live through that community in life-giving ways.

I only wish each of you knew how much the residence hall communities care for each of you living in the halls. We strive to form that comfortable community where you feel united to others and where your life makes an incredible difference.

"United we stand" . . . we stand for residents living in a close community setting knowing and caring about one another. "Divided we fall" . . . we fall into the old stigma, that of being a dormitory where you eat, sleep and close your doors to one another.

If you have any doubt about how much we care and how much greater our jobs are than what often meets the eye, then talk to us. Let us reach you in our efforts to offer you the experience we are dedicated to. There is never a need to suffer alone.

Bridget Strey  
Smith Residence Hall Director



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