

Daily Nebraskan
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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What others think

Students nationwide rally for gay rights

Scrutinizing fee expenditures or gay bashing? The student senate narrowly approved \$264 for the Gay and Lesbian Student Organization president to attend a national conference in North Carolina this March. Prior to passing, the motion failed once.

The senate routinely approves funding to other student organizations on campus. Since it usually allows greek organizations or a chemistry club to attend national conventions, why shouldn't it allow the Gay and Lesbian Student Organization to do the same?

If student senators have some reason for disliking homosexuals, so be it. Senators, like everyone else, are entitled to their opinions. But when these senators took an oath of office to represent the best interests of UNO students, they committed to representing all of the university's students -- including homosexuals.

These senators may try to hide their bigotry behind various rationalizations. Some may argue that some of the students they represent are not in favor of supporting an organization made up of homosexuals. While this may be true, it is also probably true that many students don't favor spending student fee money on trips for greeks and other organizations.

Everyone has his own biases. Senators should rise above these feelings.

The real shame is that we will never truly know why these senators voted against the measure. None of them even bothered to say why they voted the way they did. Homosexuals have been part of society throughout history. So has their persecution. If homosexuals have the courage to come out of the closet, the least these senators could do is come out in the open with their opinions.

Homosexuals pay the same amount of student fees as heterosexual students. They are entitled to equal privileges and representation.

-- The Gateway
University of Nebraska at Omaha

•Tonight the University Student Advisory Board has the power to give the Lesbian and Gay Student Alliance a board seat, helping to improve campus sensitivity and representation for a group that deserves it.

This will be the third time the alliance has applied to the board for a seat. In the past, USAB -- formerly the University Student Executive Council -- has denied the alliance a seat, as many members questioned LGSA's legitimacy and called it a "special interest group."

The needs of gay men and lesbians are unique and cannot be accurately addressed by the current members on the board. Just as USAB recognizes that many groups on campus have special concerns -- be it a black student organization, women's groups or students involved in fraternities -- so should USAB recognize that gay men and lesbians deserve a voice.

No one should have to live in fear because of who they are. Homophobia -- the fear of homosexuality -- is a reality at the university.

-- Daily Collegian
Penn State University

Abortion right not guaranteed

Craig Heckman (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 3) maintains that to make abortion illegal would be "to deprive women of their fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution." I think that this statement is false. First it should be pointed out that the right to abortion on demand is not explicitly guaranteed in the Constitution. In Roe vs. Wade, the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution is properly interpreted as providing women with the right to abortion on demand.

There is a strong and a weak sense in which abortion might be made illegal. Abortion could be made illegal in the strong sense by a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution explicitly granting the fetus the status of personhood, thus bringing the fetus under the protection of the 14th Amendment. Abortion could be made illegal in the weak sense by returning abortion legislation to the

jurisdiction of individual states. But regardless of whether abortion is made illegal in the strong or weak sense, it is false that women are then being deprived of some constitutionally guaranteed right. If abortion is made illegal in the strong sense, then the Constitution would explicitly preclude the right to abortion on demand. If abortion is made illegal in the weak sense, then the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court simply does not provide any right to abortion on demand.

I agree with Heckman that making abortion illegal will not end abortions and the problems associated with it. Unfortunately, I think that the type of education he suggests (basically sex education) will also be of little help.

Dave Reiter
graduate student
philosophy



Teachers deserve thank you

Lack of legislative support for pay increases upsets columnist

Tuesday night almost 3,000 Nebraska public school teachers gathered in Lincoln to support a teacher pay raise. They came from each of the 49 legislative districts, many taking a day off without pay to attend the rally. The message the teachers left was clear and simple -- salaries need to increase and they have the votes to back it up.

I was glad to see this much support for the pay raise. Even in these trying times of budget cuts and reductions, the teachers of this state deserve a pay raise. Teachers in Nebraska have worked for less than acceptable pay in less than acceptable environments for far too long.

I realize the problem of low teacher pay is not limited to Nebraska, it is a nationwide problem. But Nebraska is ranked 43rd in the nation for teacher salaries. Even compared to neighboring states, the pay is low. But even ranked this low, Nebraska schools fare well in standardized test scores. What does this mean? That teachers in Nebraska are doing a superb job with sub-standard pay. A pay raise would enable some show of thanks that is long overdue.

How low is pay for teachers? A friend of mine recently graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a teaching degree. She has since decided that she cannot live on a teacher's salary and is looking for employment in another field. In some out-state districts, beginning pay for teachers is \$8,000 a year. I almost make that much at a part-time job right now. I can't imagine anyone starting for that level of pay.

Another friend of mine has recently gone back to school to receive his teaching certificate, after 20 years

of being out of school. In the last 20 years, he has been able to reach a level of financial stability which now allows him to begin teaching. At the time he first graduated, teaching did not pay enough to support a family.

These are just two cases which I know of. Everyone can relate to the low payment of teachers. Almost everyone I know believes that teacher pay is a problem which needs to be addressed. In a poll taken last year Nebraskans recognized this as a problem and said that teachers deserved a pay raise.



Craig Heckman

So why haven't they gotten it? Part of the reason lies with some state legislators. Sen. Lorraine Langford of Kearney, my home district, did not plan on attending the rally Tuesday night. She was in Omaha instead. My parents, both teachers in Kearney, and other teachers from Kearney, were disturbed by this. But they do plan on making their displeasure known. In fact, I believe that all state senators should take note of the voting power which the teachers of this state wield.

Another reason for the missing pay raise is the questionable support of Gov. Kay Orr. She has yet to take a stand on the issue. This shows a lack of interest and a lack of support for education. If she truly supported education, she would not hesitate to

support this raise. But those of us at the university are familiar with her "support" of education. Remember the engineering college surcharges and faculty salaries?

Orr was unwilling to support \$1.7 million for lab equipment necessary for accreditation. I fail to see how she will support a \$100 million plan to raise teacher pay and alleviate property taxes, even though the financing of this plan has been shown to be feasible by a study sponsored by the Nebraska State Education Association. They found that the money for this plan would be available through increased tax revenues from Orr's new tax plan. And it would not take anything away from other areas. Seems like no problem, right?

Wrong. At least this is what I feel. Education has traditionally borne the brunt of budget cuts and teachers have been underpaid for so long that it somehow seems OK to continue to pay them so little.

Denying teachers this pay raise denies Nebraska a chance for better education. Teachers will not work year after year for peanuts. The best people will go elsewhere and the professional level of teaching in Nebraska will decline. This is the worst thing that could happen to the state and to America. Our future depends on the children of today. And these children depend on our schools to educate them. Without teachers, there will be no education. Then where will we be?

Support the pay raise most needed -- give teachers a break and tell them thank you. They deserve it.

Heckman is a senior international affairs major and a DN editorial columnist.

by Brian Shellito



editorial

Signed staff editorials represent the official policy of the fall 1988 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are Curt

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