

## Langford: student immaturity is 'fact of life'

State Sen. Lorraine Langford says she was right in contending that students aren't mature enough to vote as members of college governing boards -- but she didn't mean to hurt their feelings when she said so.



Sen. Langford

"I did say it and I do believe it's so," Langford said Wednesday. "I feel that we should have a student on the board, but they should not have a vote."

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Tuesday to a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow voters to decide in November if higher education should be coordinated by a Board of Regents of Higher Education and the seven public colleges and university campuses be governed by five-member boards. One member of each of those governing boards would be a voting student.

During floor debate last week, the

senator from Kearney said supporters of voting rights for the students were all about 25 years old.

"They haven't raised children. They don't realize that the 18- to 20-year-old probably makes the worst decisions in the world," Langford said last Thursday. "More young people ruin their lives in those two years than any other time in their lives."

She was immediately chastised by some senators, and later in newspaper columns, including the Lincoln Journal. An editorial in the Daily Nebraskan began:

"OK, boys and girls, it's time for 'Sen. Langford's Neighborhood.' Can you say 'Out of touch?' I thought you could."

"I hurt their feelings," Langford said after reading commentary on her remarks. "I didn't mean to hurt their feelings, but what I'm saying is true. They probably don't even know that."

"All they have to do is look around at their friends and see some of the messes their friends are in. And it's because they're not emotionally mature. It's just a fact of life," she

said.

Giving student board members a vote won't cause students to be any more interested and involved in the higher education governing process than they already are, Langford said.

"I know full well how involved the kids are. You can't get them to even vote for their own student senates. You can't get them to vote for their own officers," she said.

"We have had some fine young people on the boards," Langford said, "and their input is very important, because after all, we want them to be happy, we want them to have the kind of courses they want, we want to supply their needs while they're in school. But we are doing it with our taxes."

The Daily Nebraskan editorial said that many 18- to 20-year-olds, supporting themselves while working their way through school, are quite capable of making adult decisions.

"A lot of them work very hard for their tuition," Langford said. "I feel they should have every opportunity. When someone comes to me and says 'Well, I'm in school, I work two jobs

to support my family,' I tell you they have made a bad decision, probably sometime between the age of 18 and 20.

"They should not be in school trying to support a family and working two jobs. If they want to do that that's fine, but they have made an error in judgment, because too many of them in that situation drop out of

**My experience comes from working with young sorority girls for years.**

Sen. Langford

school, and that's too bad," Langford said. "I have only their best interests at heart. And the insult was not to any one student. The insult -- if it was an insult -- was the fact that they are not mature yet."

Another reason student board members shouldn't vote, she said, is

because the governing boards would then have six voting members.

"That's not good composition for any committee," Langford said. "You need an odd number for votes."

"And more than that, I don't back off. I have three children. Our kids are fine, they're doing well," she said. "That's not what my experience comes from. My experience comes from working with young sorority girls for years."

Langford was a member of a Kearney State College sorority governing board. She declined to name the sorority.

"The kinds of decisions they (young people) make are not well thought out. Young people are inclined to make spur-of-the-moment decisions and think about them later. They don't like to hear that, but that's what happens."

"I'm certainly not against young people," she said. "This was taken up with great fervor, by evidently UNL students. I'm certainly not anti-student. In fact I do more for higher education probably than anybody in the Legislature, or at least as much."

## Gadhafi threatens revenge for fire

ROME - A fire caused extensive damage to a Libyan chemical plant suspected of producing poison gas, and Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi on Thursday threatened to punish West Germany if its agents set the blaze.

West Germany, whose companies helped build the plant, denied the accusation and filed a protest with Libya over an angry demonstration outside Bonn's embassy in the Libyan capital, Tripoli.

Gadhafi insisted that the heavily guarded plant in Rabta, 60 miles southwest of Tripoli, was designed to produce only pharmaceuticals. But he said Libya would pay millions of dollars to any company willing to build it a chemical weapons facility.

"In such eventuality, I will sign the contract myself unhesitatingly," Gadhafi was quoted as saying by Libya's official JANA news agency, which was monitored in Rome.

He said Libya would not hesitate to manufacture weapons of "total devastation" if it had the ability, but he said it would take 20 years for Libya to develop such weapons. Libya was accused of using chemical weapons in its war against Chad.

The plant, once described by CIA Director William Webster as the world's largest chemical weapons factory, caught fire Wednesday. There were conflicting reports about damage and how the fire started.

ABC News quoted unidentified Libyan security sources as claiming the plant was burned to the ground by U.S. and Israeli agents. The United States and Israel denied involvement.

Mahmoud Azzabi, press secretary at Libya's U.N. mission in New York, said there was speculation saboteurs infiltrated Libya from neighboring Tunisia.

A previously unknown group of Libyan dissidents, the Organization of the Patriotic Wing of the Libyan Army, claimed responsibility for the blaze in a statement sent to West Germany's ARD television network.

A journalist for JANA, reached by telephone from Cairo, said he was unsure whether there were casualties in the fire but said the plant was badly damaged.

"You may consider it has been burned down," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said damage was extensive but the plant was still standing. "Common sense would tell you it's not functioning," he said. "We assume it's not functioning."

Fitzwater refused to speculate on the cause of the blaze or to disclose the source of his information.

Yitzhak Rabin, who resigned as Israel's defense minister Tuesday, denied Israel was involved in the fire and called the speculation "nonsense."

The JANA report quoted Gadhafi as saying that the cause of the blaze was under investigation. He said if investigators prove West German intelligence services were involved, "the presence of Germany economically will be eliminated and the country involved in espionage and subversion for imperialism and Zionism will lose."

West Germany's ambassador in Tripoli was summoned to meet with Libya's Foreign Office, but no threats were made during the meeting, according to a West German government official in Bonn.



Gadhafi

West Germany's Foreign Ministry in Bonn summoned a Libyan diplomat to protest a demonstration by about 800 Libyan demonstrators who temporarily blocked access to the West German Embassy in Tripoli.

The United States has accused Libya of using the plant to make chemical weapons, including mustard and nerve gases. Last week, the White House said the plant was dangerous and should be shut down. The White House refused to rule out the possibility of military action to close it.

When Western reporters were taken to the chemical plant in January 1989, they found it guarded by soldiers, tanks and surface-to-air missiles. The journalists were not allowed to inspect the plant.

An Associated Press correspondent from Rome was refused entry to Libya on Thursday on grounds that Libyan officials did not have authorization for him. Correspondents from the U.S. television networks ABC and CBS also were turned back.

Libya's Radio Tripoli urged Arab support for Libya in the face of "an aggressive campaign of American imperialism."

"The American campaign against the pharmaceutical factory at Rabta is a conspiracy against this important strategic achievement, which should furnish medicine for the entire Arab nation and break the foreign monopoly in this area," said the broadcast, monitored in Tunis.

## Gorbachev elected president; promises strengthened union

MOSCOW - Mikhail Gorbachev assumed a powerful presidency Thursday despite surprisingly strong opposition in the Soviet Congress, then pledged to keep the country from breaking up and to mend its economy with market-oriented reforms.

As the first Western-style president in this country's history, Gorbachev strengthened his already formidable powers and shifted them further from the Communist Party leadership to the government.

Gorbachev, mindful of the country's history of dictatorship and terror, promised deputies he would use his new powers to nurture the Soviet Union's "young and not fully developed democracy."

Voting results announced Thursday at the Congress of People's Deputies indicated a significant drop in support for the Soviet leader since he was chosen chairman of the Soviet legislature in May. That position was essentially a weak presidency.

Congress elected Gorbachev to a five-year term by a vote of 1,329-495. He was the only candidate. His total was 800 votes less than what he received one year ago, and not much more than the 1,123 he needed to win.

In a separate ballot, the Congress chose Gorbachev's former vice president, Anatoly Lukyanov, as its chairman. The Congress chairman holds many of the responsibilities of vice president, including the right of succession if the president cannot continue in office.

One reform-minded deputy, Igor Shamshev, said Gorbachev had lost the support of extreme conservatives and radical reformers, but held the moderates.

Teimuraz Avaliani of the western Siberian mining town of Kemerovo accused him of leading the country to the brink of collapse, and said, "I ask you not to vote for Gorbachev under

any circumstances."

Yevgeny Kogan, a representative of Russians living in the Baltic republic, accused Gorbachev of being soft on separatists. Estonia is pressing for independence.

Gorbachev will have wide powers to propose legislation, negotiate treaties, veto bills, appoint the Council of Ministers and void its decisions. He will have power to declare war if the country is attacked, and to impose direct presidential rule in certain conditions. This means he could overrule a local government.

President Bush called Gorbachev "a reasonable man" and said he was not troubled that Gorbachev has had his powers strengthened. "They've come out of the totalitarianism of the past. I don't see it as a threat," Bush said in Washington.

Gorbachev closed the day by giving a news conference, his first in the Kremlin. Spokesmen said he would meet with the press more frequently as president.

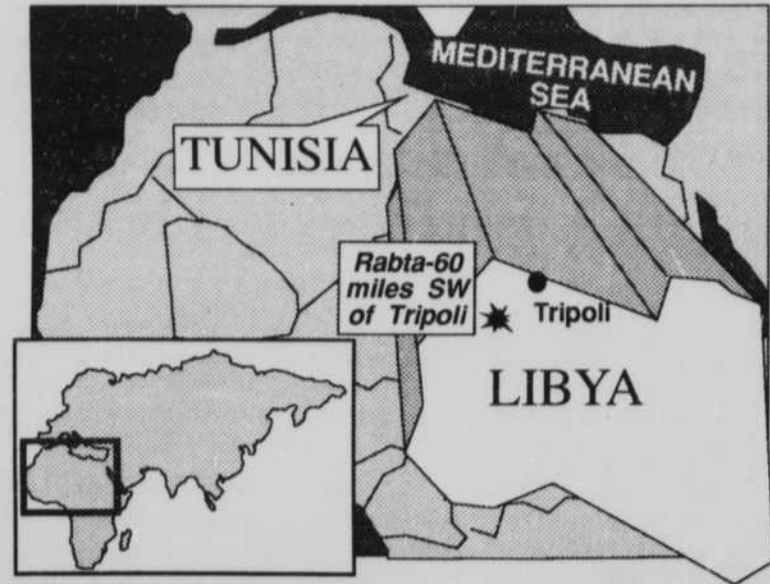
Some deputies from Lithuania, Estonia and other republics boycotted the Congress proceedings because they consider their republics independent rather than part of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev said he would work to keep the Soviet Union from breaking apart and would be the president for all of the more than 100 nationalities living in the country.

Gorbachev said he intended to work to conclude a new agreement binding the Soviet republics together in federation.

Soviet law should allow for republics to secede if they wish, Gorbachev said, but he did not specify under what conditions.

Gorbachev said he would work to create a "viable market" economy, governed not by bureaucrats but by taxation, bank control of balance of payments, and adjustable interest rates.



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

### Daily Nebraskan

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