

Allegiance to pledge

Senator's resignation example to voters

Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota made a promise when he was first elected to office in 1986.

If marked improvements had not been made in the federal trade and budget deficits before he came up for re-election, the Democrat said, he would step down and let someone else try.

Now, although Conrad has admitted the failure of Congress

to take action and has announced his resignation, 71 percent of North Dakotans want him to run again anyway, according to a 1990 public opinion survey, and his office recently has been flooded with calls. Sixty-two percent favored Conrad in February over a Republican rival.

What about throwing the bums out? Where have the term limiters gone? Hasn't Congress lost touch with America?

"Unless the American people are convinced that significant change must occur, nothing much will



Lisa Pyllik/DN

happen," Conrad told the World-Herald. "We will continue to have gridlock."

Conrad said that on the day he announced his resignation, he introduced a five-year, \$500 billion deficit-reduction plan that won all of three votes in the 21-member budget committee.

The Senator's attitude on budget reform, while admirable, probably didn't win him the huge following he enjoys in his state. One of his biggest accomplishments was securing a \$500 million drought-relief package for North Dakota farmers in 1988 and 1989.

Conrad conceded the action added to the deficit along with everything else.

"People have to make judgments about what they do. . . . It's a matter of hard choices and making things add up."

North Dakotans remember the money Conrad spent more readily than the money he attempted to save. They are representative of voters across the country.

With all the yelling and hot air on how we need definite action in Washington, it might seem surprising that a senator who acknowledges Congress' failings and wants a new crowd to step in is drowned out by voters who don't desire change.

If Americans demand reform, they must be willing to pay the price through budgetary cutbacks. If not, they should stop whining.

Conrad remains firm in his decision to move back to North Dakota.

"I made a pledge, and violating it would have just increased the doubts about people serving in public office," he said. "This was a final decision."

Only when voters elect more such representatives will America see any real improvement.

Child doesn't get free choice

I am writing in response to the letter "Reproductive freedom essential" that appeared in the DN on April 27. The writer of the letter could not understand why the issue of abortion is an ethical or moral question. I would like to think that all of us as individuals have a good set of moral and ethical guidelines that governs our lives. Having this set of moral and ethical guidelines, I don't know how a person could support a woman's "freedom of choice" to have an abortion.

Perhaps the best way to settle this matter would be to consult Webster's once again and to see what it has to say about morals and ethics. Webster's defines moral as follows: a) of or relating to principles of right and wrong, b) conforming to a standard of right behavior. Ethic is defined as: a) the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation, b) a set of moral principles or values.

It would seem to me that we all have an idea of what is good and bad or what is right and wrong. Since people cannot always agree on what is right and what is wrong, we end up with such moral and ethical questions as abortion.

If I were to kill a 3-month-old child, I would think that almost every person in this country would accuse

me of committing an immoral and unethical act and would expect me to be punished for it. However, if I were to end that same child's life by performing an abortion, my actions would go unpunished. How can we have such a great double standard of morals and ethics when it comes to ending a life?

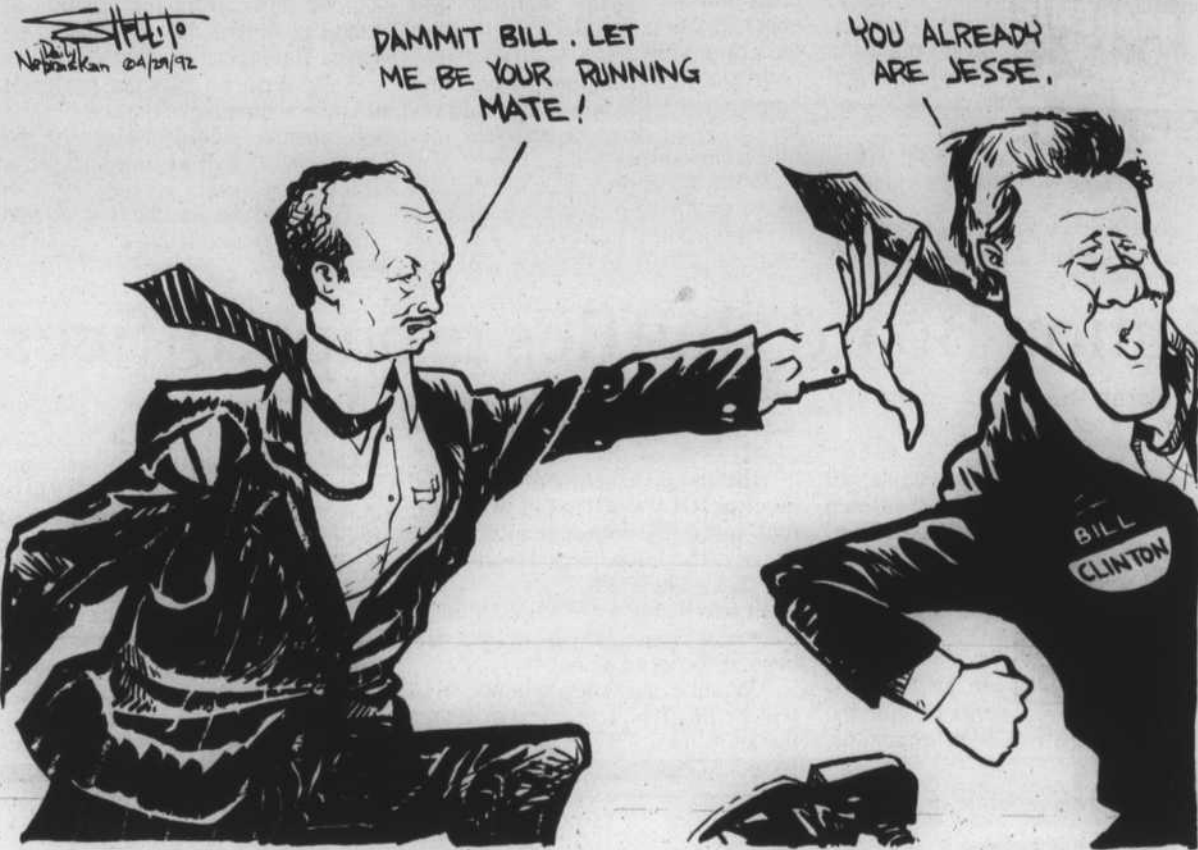
It has always amazed me how people can use the term "freedom of choice." What the term is basically saying is that a mother has the freedom to choose whether or not her child should live or die. I just wonder sometimes where is the child's "freedom of choice"? Does the child even have one? According to the letter, freedom is the state or quality of being free; especially an exemption or liberation from the control of some other person or some arbitrary power; liberty; independence. It would appear to me that the child does not have much freedom or much choice in the matter.

The letter was right when it said that not all people are treated as equals. Obviously, we are not treating the lives of the unborn as equal.

Many times I have heard the phrase that the children are our future. What kind of future does our country face when we keep killing our children?

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KIRK ROSENBAUM Garages hold untold treasures

Last weekend I was rummaging through my parents' garage, looking for some semi-valuable yet forgotten items of theirs I might be able to pawn. They had changed the locks on me again, but I finally managed to get through a window without breaking too much glass.

The old neighbor guy was watching me from his garden, and I suspected he would call my parents, but it didn't matter. I was fairly sure they wouldn't press charges this time because I had a legitimate reason for burglary. The shelter had called to tell me they had picked up my dog and I had told them I would be right down to bail him out. That had been more than a week ago.

Now I was having trouble raising the ransom money, and I figured perhaps there might be something salable in my parents' garage. Like most garages, theirs is a receptacle for things that are just barely too nice to throw out. A set of 20-year-old ladies' golf clubs, a broken outboard motor, an 8-track collection and 100 feet of leaky garden hose were the most valuable items I could find.

I had already searched my old bedroom closet for old baseball cards, wheat pennies, comic books, anything of value. My dog had to be getting nervous by this time, but all I could find were stacks of junk from long-gone high school days — yearbooks, photographs and notebooks full of mindless doodles and Van Halen song lyrics.

Actually, if you need to kill a few hours this summer, try looking through your old homework assignments. For instance, I discovered a paper I had written on "The Great Gatsby." My thesis statement was something about Jay Gatsby "getting a bum rap," but I concluded that overall "it was a pretty cool book."

Not that I'm much more literate these days, mind you. In fact, I may have turned that same paper in again some time during college. In any case, "Gatsby" might be a fine book, but try telling that to the smiling machine working behind the counter at the bookstore during buy-back time.

"Sir, I'm not sure we're buying that book," he said as I handed it to him.

"What do you mean you're not buying it? Everybody should own a copy of this book."

At this point, he consulted his thick, red tome full of lies and trickery.



I considered hauling the trunk up on the roof somehow and dropping it on the driveway, but it was probably so loaded with gold coins I couldn't lift it. And what if it contained priceless Ming vases? I had to be careful.

"Well . . . we can give you a dollar for it, I guess," he mumbled, smiling.

"A dollar? For the finest novel of American literature? You must be mad!" I yelled.

At this point, I had a choice to make. If I left the dog locked up, he would most certainly be killed. He was far too ugly and vicious to be adopted by even the most caring of souls. But a dollar for Fitzgerald's finest work was an insult.

Anyway, that is how I found myself snooping around the garage, cursing the bookstores for their stinginess and inhumanity. Why couldn't I have been an engineering major? They always get \$50 or \$60 apiece for their used books. Besides, how hard can it be to drive a train?

Only a few items in the garage even had any nostalgic value. My first shotgun, my old Scooby-Doo tackle box, a set of fun-yet-deadly Lawn Darts. I was just about to abandon hope when I discovered an old steamer trunk in the corner.

It was one of those massive, ancient boxes with iron straps and a giant, rusted padlock. Certainly there were jewels inside, or Spanish doubloons, or Confederate money or other treasures.

I felt betrayed by my parents. They were in possession of a princely wealth

that could've sent me to Harvard (of course, double-digit ACT scores would've helped.) Quickly, I searched for something I could use to smash the padlock.

The shotgun was a possibility, but I couldn't find any shells. Again, I cursed my parents. No patriotic and decent Americans would ever leave their firearms lying around unloaded.

I considered hauling the trunk up on the roof somehow and dropping it on the driveway, but it was probably so loaded with gold coins I couldn't lift it. And what if it contained priceless Ming vases? I had to be careful.

Finally I found a roofing hatchet and went to work on the lock. Such a tool would be handy — if wealth like this was lying around a garage, certainly the walls of the house must be full of secret passages and vaults. I would need the hatchet to get through those walls. Besides, the hatchet would be useful for fending off pirates.

Eventually I smashed the padlock. Closing my eyes, I opened the lid from behind, in order to avoid any flying knives or poisoned booby-traps.

Imagine my horror, dear reader, when I discovered that the only thing in the box was a yellowed old newspaper. It was dated July 16, 1974. Someone had obviously beaten me to the treasure. I felt as Geraldo Rivera must have felt when he cracked Al Capone's empty vault — cheated.

Actually, the newspaper was sort of fun to read. It was printed back in the days when people still took anything Richard Nixon said seriously. And there were a few laughs to be had calling about items advertised in the Want Ads, asking people if they still had the hi-fi or the Ford Pinto for sale.

Other than that, my expedition was a failure, but I encourage everyone to re-examine the contents of their garages while home for summer vacation. You never know what you might find, and if you don't find anything, have a garage sale. Pick a weekend when the folks are away and slap a pricetag on everything. People will buy your useless junk, keep it for a few years and then sell it at their own garage sales.

Of course, if you need money immediately for bona fide emergencies (like springing your pet from death row), just do what any good American citizen or Congressman would do. Write a bad check.

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