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EDITORIAL

Promises to keep

Clinton takes risk by softening tax stance

With one week left before President-elect Bill Clinton takes office, there are growing indications that the centerpiece of his campaign may be endangered, along with a host of other promises made to the American people.

The reason is the budget deficit. Figures released by the Office of Management and Budget last week showed a deficit of \$292 billion in the 1994 fiscal year and a shortfall of \$319 billion by the end of the 1998 fiscal year.



President-elect Bill Clinton

The figure for 1994 is about \$18 billion dollars greater than previously thought, but it is a far cry from the \$400 billion figure for 1993 bandied about in the recent presidential campaign.

As a result of what the Democrats characterize as deception by the Bush administration, Clinton's aides and allies are now scrambling to back away from promises made in the campaign.

The first victim is apparently the much-vaunted middle-class tax cut. The cut was a focal point of Clinton's plan to help what he called "the forgotten middle class" who supposedly suffered all through the 1980s. It drew heavy criticism from his opponents in the primaries, particularly former Massachusetts Sen. Paul Tsongas. In the face of the "Pander Bear" label, Clinton stuck to his guns all the way through Nov. 3.

This weekend, though, Speaker of the House Tom Foley said the notion of a middle-class tax cut would have to be "rethought." Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell of Maine told questioners on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Clinton probably wouldn't be able to push through the tax cut immediately. Clinton's choice for OMB Director, Leon Panetta, also appeared cautious toward the tax cut in his confirmation hearings last week.

In addition, Clinton is reportedly set to halve the amount he will allocate toward infrastructure improvements, another important part of his campaign. He is also set to back away from his promise to cut the deficit in half by 1996.

Clinton's shying away from his promises because of a mere \$18 billion in one year is hard to understand, especially when one notes that Clinton's own projections are based on the same numbers as are President Bush's but with different assumptions. Clinton's own forecast for the end of the 1993 fiscal year was put at \$426 billion.

Bill Clinton was elected on a theme of "change," a promise that he would reawaken America after a 12-year dream. Business as usual was to be avoided. So far, Clinton has made excellent use of symbolism to accomplish that.

Substance matters in the history books, however. In backing away from his promises, Clinton runs the risk of being viewed as just another politician and causing massive disenchantment among his followers.

If he truly wants to be an agent of change, Clinton must have the courage to stand behind his words, and not make the voters "read his lips."

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

I TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID ABOUT THE PITTER-PADDER OF LITTLE FEET ON THE HILL AGAIN



DEB McADAMS

Jumping without cord worth risks

I was raised to work. It was respectable, necessary, and one could never be without work. To my folks, children of the depression, the absence of a job meant poverty, hunger, abandonment by fathers and sometimes suicide.

My Aunt Beulah, a high-school dropout, worked hard and amassed the family wealth. She had flame-orange hair with matching lipstick, and I wanted to be like her. In my family, a woman's opinion didn't count for much unless she had a wad of cash to back it up.

I came from a world where a job equals self-esteem, and went into a minimum-wage world under a blue-collar ceiling. I met computer literacy with farm-labor skills, yet I worked hard because I believed that hard work results in opportunity.

I doubled my income within four years to a sum which barely exceeded the poverty line, a far cry from the dreams I had when I dressed my Barbie in her feather boa for a date with Ken. After several years of hard work in this greenhouse or that garden, I lived in four rooms and drove a moderately beat-up Ford.

I made a decision. I broke out of the confines of my conditioning, and I quit my job. After having been a non-traditional freshman for six years, I enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as a full-time student.

Leaving a job to go to school doesn't seem like such a big deal, unless you're doing it. Then you have a clue as to what it feels like to step off the space shuttle without an umbilical. You've just bet all your chips on a relative unknown, but an unknown which couldn't prove much worse than a string of non-developmental jobs.

For those traditional students who consider dropping out, even if you feel you have an extraordinary future in athletics, let me suggest that you



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examine the fastest-growing student group on campus. A lot of non-traditional students can relate just how far one can go in the job market sans degree.

I'm not the only one to make the transition from non-traditional to full-time student. Full-time status, incidentally, doesn't make one feel all that "traditional" when the majority of your classmates were born around the time you got nailed for shoplifting Bic pens.

There's a certain excitement to transition which revives ones intensity and appreciation for being alive. It's a similar, yet less deadly, excitement than the feeling I used to get when I buried the speedometer needle of my '66 Mercury for a 130 mph nightcruise without headlights. I know

a lot about suicidal tendencies. I know a lot about overcoming them. I know a lot about what it means to change oneself.

I have the reassurance of the examples set by those who have gone before me, who have redirected and constructed their lives according to their desires.

One particular individual whose example I've admired was the assistant librarian at my high school. She was a genuine educator in a system which sometimes recruited the dubious and occasionally the ill for the tasks of teaching and administrating.

Beck was a passionate reader and a compassionate listener. She read my poems and essays and blatherings. She encouraged me to write, express, and to survive. I graduated from high school and spent the following decade trying to sort out my first 20 years. She divorced, completed her degree and raised her kids.

We met again after 12 years, on this campus. She was teaching Comp 254, and doing research for her dissertation. I was asking her to help me overcome a 10-year-old writer's block. She gave me a B+ and resurrected a passion for something I love.

Jumping off the space shuttle isn't nearly so frightening knowing someone else who jumped is only a handful of months away from being addressed as "doctor" for the rest of her life. I have also seen that such goals are reached with the stubborn obstinance of getting through one more day.

Leaving my job to become a student won't shake the earth, but it's a milestone for me, as it is for anyone who does it. We just keep asking ourselves, "what if it works?"

When I go watch Beck accept her Ph.D., I may not have to ask anymore.

McAdams is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

P.S. Write back



The Daily Nebraskan wants to hear from you. If you want to voice your opinion about an article that appears in the newspaper, let us know. Just write a brief letter to the editor, sign it, (don't forget your student ID number) and mail it to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Or stop by the office in the basement of the Nebraska Union and visit with us. We're all ears.