

Daily Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

Toss out the cushion

Lowering blood-alcohol limit makes sense

In light of the potential danger, it would be hard for drunken driving laws to be too strict. Getting behind the wheel of an automobile and hitting the streets without control is dangerous to everyone. And society should not tolerate it.

Nor should Nebraskans tolerate the argument that a proposed bill in the Legislature is too tough.

LB80, sponsored by LaVon Crosby and three other senators, would lower Nebraska's legal blood-alcohol limit from the current .10 percent to .08 percent.

The most persuasive argument in support of the bill — in fact the only argument necessary — is that the current limit isn't low enough.

According to statistics Crosby cited at yesterday's hearing of the Legislature's Transportation Committee, one-fifth of all fatal, alcohol-related accidents involve drivers with blood-alcohol levels that are currently legal.

An Omaha police officer said he frequently pulled over drivers who were not legally intoxicated or capable of operating their cars.

And a national safety official said the five states that already had the lower limit — California, Maine, Oregon, Utah and Vermont — had all seen significant drops in alcohol-related fatalities.

Just as importantly, people should insist that the law be carried out. Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said some judges, because of a lack of faith in the accuracy of the measurements, would not convict someone of drunken driving if the driver's blood-alcohol content was .10. In effect, the judges are allowing drunken drivers a cushion.

Not only does that go against the essence of the law, but it is stupid. Alcohol, like cigarette smoke, has the potential to kill someone other than the person using the product. And nothing is so enjoyable that killing someone else as a result of it should be legal.

Wrong pocket to pick

University is poor target for budget cuts

Get ready for the ax to fall.

If the University of Nebraska has to endure the \$13.98 million cut suggested by the Legislature's Appropriations Committee Monday, programs will have to be slashed and people will have to be fired.

It will not be a pretty sight, and UNL can expect to bear the brunt of the cut.

Michael Mulnix, executive director for university relations at UNL, said a \$13 million cut could send the university into a crisis situation.

"We're not crying wolf," he said.

The Legislature must make tough decisions to close a state budget gap of about \$68 million over two years. But it would be a great mistake for legislators to approve a \$13.98 million cut for NU — \$12 million more than Gov. Ben Nelson recommended — as a method of solving its financial troubles.

NU will have to swallow a cut, like all state agencies. But the Legislature should not choke it to death in order to avoid raising taxes or cutting other programs.

Despite its costs, the university is one of Nebraska's most valuable assets. Cutting its budget may result in short-term financial gain, but the long-term result will be harmful for the state.

The Legislature should either look elsewhere for money to make up its revenue shortfall or do the responsible thing and ask the people of Nebraska to take a tax increase to avoid sacrificing the university and the valuable service it provides.

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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dating

I am writing to respond to the article on interracial dating by Kirby Moss (DN, Feb. 8, 1993). Kirby has written a thought-provoking article based on experience in the real world. As usual, he has shown himself to be one of the better columnists at the DN.

It seemed to me, though, that some unpleasant experiences with societal attitudes on interracial relationships led him to emphasize the difficulties faced by interracial couples over the joy that a loving relationship can bring. That's understandable, for we all evaluate our world largely on the basis of our experiences.

Perhaps the best point that Kirby made in his column was the observation that "no couple exists in a vacuum," or that family, friends and society all put pressures on a couple. I'd like to suggest that sometimes family and friends can be a positive influence on a mixed couple, even if the larger society has some catching-up to do.

As a white man recently married to an African woman, I know that racially mixed couples are a novelty in some quarters. We have received our share of strange and sometimes hostile looks from whites as well as blacks, and we have sometimes found it necessary to explain, "Yes we are together. We're married." But each of our families, in Africa as well as Nebraska, has greeted our marriage with genuine caring rather than simple acceptance. Our friends here in Lincoln — yes, Lincoln! — representing various countries, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and skin tones have been nothing but supportive.

I recognize that we have been very fortunate to have supportive friends and family. I further recognize that American society still has a long way to go, as Kirby's article demonstrates. He is absolutely right to outline the challenges that interracial couples face. I just wanted to point out that there can be rewards as well — in having the opportunity to learn about each other, respect each other, and just maybe in helping to change our society one family at a time.

Stephen Witte
graduate student
history

Prayer

I want people to understand that discrimination against homosexuals is equal to that against gender and race and these battles have already begun. I don't think we have won them by any means and I doubt we will win them in my lifetime, but the initial declaration of the battle was the same. Many people were adamantly against that type of change but through time, steps were made to end that discrimination.

Many countries around the world require their citizens to serve in the national militia. The United States prides itself on freedom and, within the scope of freedom, allows its citizens to choose whether they will serve in the armed forces. It is ironic, then, that the United States for so long did not give women, blacks or gays the freedom to serve their country through military service. We have taken steps to conquer two-thirds of the problem.

Patrick Tuttle
graduate student

The social reality of increasing diversity and the economic reality of a service-oriented economy have caused a culture shock within this country. Laws and government program implementations must be adjusted to respond to this culture shock and ensure our social growth.

Extreme ideological advocacy only prevents the maturing of our society. While both conservative and liberal viewpoints are valuable for the DN, we need to realize our viewpoints need to be coordinated with reality. This is achieved through compromise and appreciation of the general picture of our growing society. People, step back and look at the forest and do not get so wrapped in one tree!

Bryson Bartels
graduate student
public administration



David Badders/DN

Ideology

I have been reading the Daily Nebraskan for about 10 years. I have witnessed the bashing of liberal viewpoints as well as conservative viewpoints.

Recently, issues about prayer at UNL graduation ceremonies and the rewriting of history have been debated from each ideological viewpoint. These arguments have represented how somewhat chaotic our society is. Our society, as well as our economy, is experiencing growing pains. The childhood dreams of civil rights and the war on poverty of the 1960s have confronted the adolescent realities of the 1990s.

Ban

I want to address an issue that has escalated to national focus. The issue is President Clinton's desire to lift the ban on homosexuals serving in the armed forces. I would like to say outright that I avidly support this action.

Lifting the ban will not give special protection or consideration to gay people. The lift will merely give them equal consideration under guidelines and directives and will allow them to

Here's some food for thought when considering using a student vote to determine whether to have prayer at graduation ceremonies. First of all, it is apparent that the low voter turnout at student elections is a minority of highly conservative students, as shown by the "representation" of students by the elected members of ASUN. Why should the less wealthy, more liberal students vote at an election that only presents the conservative candidates who have the money to compete with other wealthy conservatives?

ASUN has recently assured that the process will continue to bring forth those with money by lifting the previous spending limit of \$3,500. Those who have not had to struggle in life obviously cannot relate to the entire student body, especially to those who are of different faiths, or those who believe in separation of church and state.

Another point to consider is the fact that even if there was a high turnout, is it right to have a prayer at a public institution? The majority of people in our democratic system have on several occasions in history supported policies that were wrong. For ages white Christian American society supported a policy treating minorities as inferiors, and denied them equal access to education and employment. For well over 100 years this same society supported treating women as inferiors by suppressing them and not allowing them to vote.

These are extreme examples of the injustices that the majority will inflict on the minority if given the chance, but if people will elect to support such blatant injustices, won't they elect to support less profound injustices as well?

Paul Koester
senior
agronomy