

Daily Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

Break the cycle

Welfare reform experiment worth a try

The Clinton administration gave its approval Tuesday for an experimental welfare program in Vermont that could serve as an example to the rest of the nation. The program, which has passed the state senate, would allow welfare recipients to earn more and accumulate more assets without losing benefits. It also would cut benefits for people who don't find jobs or accept public service work after two and one-half years on welfare and place restrictions on how welfare money could be spent.

The White House approved the plan as part of its strategy of giving states maximum flexibility to test welfare reform ideas. Clinton had promised comprehensive reform at the federal level during the presidential election campaign.

The Vermont plan seems to be a step in the right direction. It would allow welfare recipients to work to provide additional income for their families. This experience will in turn help them to gain more permanent employment.

The penalties included in the program are tough but fair. Welfare recipients who did not find work within two and one-half years would lose their benefits, but could accept public service work. That is not too great a sacrifice to ask.

Welfare is a program desperately in need of reform. It is, for too many Americans, an endless cycle of poverty with no way out.

Vermont's proposal could help break that cycle. If it passes and works, it could serve as an example to the rest of the nation for welfare reform.

OTHERS' VIEW

On March 30, a White House official announced that President Clinton would ask Congress to end a ban on federally funded abortions. Enacted in 1976, now 17 years old, the ban most certainly needs to be repealed.

By nature, the ban is discriminatory. Known as the Hyde Amendment after its author, Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), the ban is prejudiced against poor women who rely on federal programs for health care. As a result, several thousand women each year are unable to get safe abortions.

If repealed, states would then be required to pay for abortions for women who could not afford them. The money used would come from federal Medicaid funds. Those who oppose repealing the ban do not want to see their tax dollars being used for abortions.

Other groups and individuals against lifting the ban do not necessarily oppose abortion but still do not want to help finance something they generally consider to be a matter of choice. Their arguments include abortions being analogous to other basic rights such as bearing arms. The fallacy of this logic lies in the fact that choosing to own a gun is also an indulgence of sorts. A person's decision to certain indulgences is usually based upon money — if he or she wants something and can afford it, then he or she will usually have it. However, a woman would not have an abortion simply because she could afford one.

Although abortion is a right, it should not be confused with just another choice or desire. Once the private, personal and difficult decision to have an abortion has been made, the process then becomes a fundamental health need — a need that should not be questioned. A need that should not be denied because of a lack of funds.

— The University Daily Kansan
University of Kansas

EDITORIAL POLICY

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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

Ishtar

Here's a fascinating tidbit for you trivia fans out there. Ever wonder why we use eggs and Easter bunnies as a symbol for Easter? In early Christian times, most of those being converted were pagans, a very superstitious group who worshipped many gods. Among the gods was the beloved fertility god, Ishtar.

Eggs and bunnies were also fertility symbols. The less change required of pagans to become Christians, the easier it was to convert them, so the celebrations were integrated. In this manner, celebrations such as sunrise service (worship of the sun) and Easter came to be.

Paul Koester
senior
astronomy

Rights

I am writing this in response to James Gustafson's letter (DN, April 13, 1993). It seems to me that everywhere I look anymore, someone is complaining that his or her rights have been violated. These claims may be true, but they are blown out of proportion, just as Gustafson's case is.

I don't claim that everyone at this school is, or is even supposed to be, a Midwestern Christian. This is the majority, though, and I am not ignoring those who don't fit into the majority.

I realize that we all have the same right to attend this university, but the majority must be considered. There is no documentation that a single court case has been overturned because the differing minority of the jury felt its rights were violated. Such actions would be absurd, and so are the accusations that Todd Burger and myself believe majorities are the only people who matter and minorities can go to hell.

I am a member of a greek house, which happens to be a minority. However, we are not forcing you to participate in greek week, so don't force your beliefs or traditions on me. I believe everyone has his or her rights regardless of race, sex or religion.

The problem is that someone's rights were going to be violated here, and I think that the number of people who feel alienated should be as minimal as possible, so a majority rule would be appropriate. I don't think I've ever heard anyone bitching about having an extra day of vacation, but it sounds like that's what you're doing, and I think the majority will agree with me.

Brian Classen
sophomore
business administration

Choice

In response to Gary Young's "Choice argument is not enough" (DN, April 12, 1993), I would like to offer the following commentary.

I will not presume to speak for all abortionists, but I have an argument that supports the need for abortion and does not rely on the proposition that we must observe an individual's right for choice. Indeed, I am prepared to state my argument on moral grounds, toe to toe with any anti-abortionist's.



David Badders/DN

Let me discuss the morality of the future. The morality of responsibility. The responsibility of providing life for future generations. Let us discuss the morality of ecosystem destruction on a planetary scale, justified to support the burgeoning population of human beings. Let us discuss the morality and responsibility of foresight, hindsight and insight.

Those who truly give a damn about future generations of humanity have the responsibility to realize that cancerous growth is occurring on this planet today. Humans are the cancer, and today's righteous are the catalysts for global destruction. Can anti-abortionists rationalize and accept the responsibility for the destruction of all forms of human life in the future to save unwanted lives in the present?

To date, anti-abortionists do not provide for the unwanted, they simply demand the cessation of abortion. Soon, the carrying capacity of the planet will be met, at that point, and it is near, when the earth's ability to sustain life is compromised, then what? What future will there be for humanity if human population growth continues unchecked, or, in the name of preserving humanity, we reduce the diversity of life on earth to mono-cultures of plants and animals? I do not wish to live in such a world, and I would not wish it on anyone's grandchildren. But these are the

choices, so I guess it really does boil down to a question of choice.

So, whose morality is right: mine, an altruistic selfless morality, or the anti-abortionists, a shortsighted, ultimately selfish morality? It is curious to me that the anti-abortion camp is a loose confederation of Christians under a common banner, "life." Tell me, when your grandchildren ask about the animals on Noah's ark, will you be honest and tell them although your God saw the need to preserve them, you in your infinite wisdom willingly annihilated them so that human life could be sustained? What a confused and unhappy grandchild you shall have!

I implore you, all life is important, not just human life. Abortion is not so inhumane when you look at it in terms of the ramifications that unchecked human growth entails.

Well, Gary, is the preservation and respect for all life on earth a compelling enough argument to justify abortion? Make a choice.

Terry Vidal
Lincoln

'Blindness'

I would like to commend Gary Young for his excellent column (DN, April 12, 1993) on the "pro-choice defense." I have for a long time been confused about the apparent blindness on the part of the many people who use these arguments and whom I otherwise consider to be intelligent and reasonable persons. The argument from a "choice" position is only valid as a peripheral argument. As a foundation it is, at best, weak, and at worst, as Young demonstrated in his column, dangerous and even lethal.

It seems to me that the truly fundamental issue of the abortion debate never gets the attention it deserves. Neither side denies the fetus is alive, for biological processes are undoubtedly at work. And in as much as a life process is occurring within a mother's womb, termination of that process is undeniably "killing" — if the word be taken in its most general sense. But is the "killing" only in the sense that we use when we speak of killing germs on a toilet seat, or in the sense of putting a horse to sleep; or is it, as the pro-lifers say, just like killing your own children?

The fundamental issue, the point that needs to be resolved before progressing the argument, is whether or not the fetus is to be considered human. Before this is determined, none of the other arguments carry much weight, or at least they are being asked to carry a weight disproportionate to their nature.

John Heurtz
senior
English