

# OPINION

Thursday, January 12, 1995

Page 4

Daily  
**Nebraskan**  
Editorial Board  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Jeff Zeleny ..... Editor, 472-1766  
Matt Woody ..... Opinion Pages Editor  
Jeff Robb ..... Managing Editor  
DeDra Janssen ..... Associate News Editor  
Rainbow Rowell ..... Arts & Entertainment Editor  
James Mehlsing ..... Cartoonist  
Chris Hain ..... Senior Reporter

## Hard time

### More executions drawback of plan

Three strikes — you're in. That's one of the main goals of Gov. Ben Nelson's crime package, revealed Wednesday at the Capitol.

Among other things, Nelson would keep repeat criminals from the possibility of parole — three strikes and you're in. That's just one of the good things about the package.

The governor's plan would also provide additional funding for juvenile justice, expanding on a crime bill that the Legislature passed last year.

As a whole, the package is very characteristic of the get-tough-on-crime initiatives that Nelson has proposed in the past. Few people would argue with the more money for law-enforcement equipment, or the heavier sentences for violent and dangerous criminals, or the boot camps for nonviolent young-adult offenders, that the governor's crime package would create.

However, the package has its drawbacks.

Some of the other provisions in Nelson's package would increase executions in Nebraska. Nelson proposes the creation of a constitutional amendment that would give him sole authority over capital-case pardons, and would require the Nebraska Supreme Court to expedite its decisions on capital-offense appeals.

Nebraska needs tougher crime laws, but not more executions. The Legislature should thoroughly examine Nelson's proposals and pass only those that will help the people of this state.

## Another view

Early this year Douglas County will be part of a tri-county effort to provide medical services for low-income residents with HIV.

The federally funded program will include free screening of blood-cell counts and various illnesses and referrals to about 20 doctors in the area. The service will not turn away those patients who are taking experimental drugs.

These 20 doctors should be commended for helping. They will hardly make a profit from this — they will be reimbursed by the government up to \$600 annually for each patient they treat.

And while their efforts form a positive step, these doctors' work is hardly enough. Free testing by area health centers should be made available once a month.

Patients will not seek medical relief from HIV unless they know they have it. And sometimes even the \$19 fee charged at Watkins Memorial Health Center is too costly for those who are worried they may have contracted HIV.

Instead, many who are infected may go through life as before, and possibly infect others with the fatal disease.

Condoms aren't a catch-all solution to the AIDS crisis, either. A failure rate for pregnancy does exist with condoms, and viruses are far smaller than sperm.

For these reasons, area health centers should provide free AIDS testing at least once a month. The cost of extra tests are far less than extra lives that rot away for years because of AIDS.

Already, nearly 800 people in Kansas have died from the deadly disease.

And there is no accurate way to know how many people are infected with HIV unless we offer free testing.

— University Daily Kansan  
University of Kansas

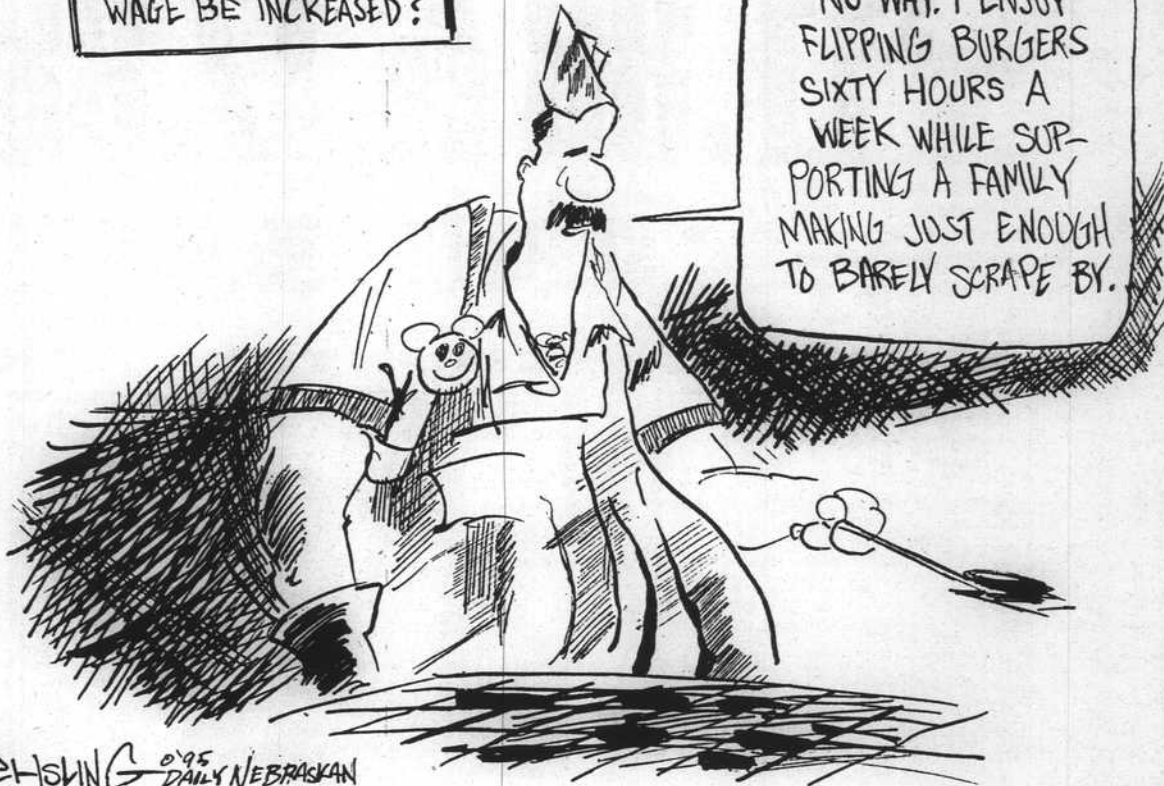
### Editorial policy

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1995. 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: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

Q: SHOULD MINIMUM WAGE BE INCREASED?



## Profs: shape up or ship out

Traditional teaching methods abound in our supposedly liberal university.

As an education major, it has become obvious that although many of the professors who have taught my classes may be the foremost authorities in their areas of expertise, they don't know the first thing about how to teach.

It is commonly thought that if someone is knowledgeable about a subject, then that person also knows the best ways to present it to students.

I have had way too many classes where the instructor has just stood up at the front of the room and droned on about a topic for an hour or two or three, or often the whole damn semester.

Then, after the students have absorbed the material the best that they can, they are expected to regurgitate it on mindless scantron tests, or if they are lucky, in a limited essay.

Too many egotistical professors feel that they are some fountain of knowledge that pours vast understanding into the empty vessels of students' minds.

Unfortunately, real learning doesn't happen this way. Even more unfortunately, very few people realize this.

Oh yeah, it is possible to learn from repetitive reading of notes and textbooks. As most students know, you can learn the material for about a day or two, which is all you need to pass the test.

But if students are questioned on a subject they studied the semester before, they usually say something like, "Macroeconomics? I had that last year. It means, like, bigger



Joel Strauch

than microeconomics."

True learning and retention of learning involves tying the new stuff to stuff that the student already knows, and getting the students directly intricated into the teaching/learning process.

A teacher has to make the material meaningful, present it in a meaningful way and make the material belong to the students.

Yeah, I know that's vague, but I'm not here to teach professors how to teach (although I could probably learn quite a few of 'em somethin' or 'nother). I'm just here to let them know there might be something wrong with how they're teaching.

I have come up with a checklist that professors can use to assess what the hell they're doing (and that students can use to assess what the hell, if anything, they're learning).

Check it out:

1) If the majority of your students are using your class as naptime or regularly threatening suicide, something's amiss. Either pass out amphetamines at the beginning of class, or try discussion and an assortment of activities to alleviate the horrendous boredom of monotonous lectures.

2) If none of your students get

an 'A' or most of them are doing below average, it might be time to look at your evaluation methods. If you are using tests that ask straight-knowledge questions like "What was the birthdate and bra size of John Wilkes Booth's mother?" you're not doing anyone a favor.

3) If students become crossword puzzle experts or write letters to every relative except Aunt Bertha during class, you're not getting them involved enough. Learning is dependent upon ownership of the material, not limited rental.

4) If you are teaching the same way you did last semester and the semester before that, etc., slap yourself! Classes change, students change and hopefully professors change. The teaching process must be a constantly evolving one, or the class will grow stagnant and wither away like a marijuana plant in a churchyard.

5) If you think you are a really good teacher, but you can't defend your methods of instruction, you probably suck as an instructor. This isn't your fault, but you need to take steps to improve yourself.

These are just a sampling of the myriad problems that professors might face if they are trapped in the traditional teaching rut.

I don't pretend to be a perfect teacher (although I am awfully good), and I know that I have a lot to learn.

Teachers need to be constantly learning new ways to think and to instruct. When you think that you have nothing left to learn, you probably know nothing about learning.

Strauch is a senior secondary education major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

P  
l  
e  
a  
s  
e  
  
W  
r  
i  
t  
e  
  
B  
a  
c  
k

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 and sign it (don't forget your student ID number) and mail it to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R Street, Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, or stop by the office in the basement of the Nebraska Union and visit with us. We're all ears.