

OPINION

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Daily Nebraskan

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Casting the ballot

Current electoral system voter-friendly

The Nebraska Legislature took the wrong step last Thursday in taking the first step toward approving a bill that would make the state's electoral college system winner-take-all.

Nebraska took a step in the right direction in 1991 by establishing the system it has in common with only Maine. The states allow for division of the electoral college votes between candidates.

The winner of the statewide popular vote receives each of the two votes designated for Nebraska's U.S. senators. But the three legislative districts are also evaluated on an individual basis; each of those districts hands out its own electoral vote.

Ideally, Americans should be allowed to elect the president directly, but that does not diminish the wise move Nebraska made in updating its system. Our state senators need to realize that and uphold the system in later votes.

The national electoral college system gives voters no credit. Americans have shown over more than 200 years an uncanny ability to elect a competent leader. They will continue to do so in the future.

Sen. Doug Kristensen of Minden, the chief sponsor of the repeal measure, is another who doesn't believe in the American voters. Kristensen contends the current system could make Nebraska a target for fringe candidates.

What fringe candidates? Ross Perot, who gained 19 percent of the national popular vote in 1992, yet won not a single electoral college vote? John Anderson, who garnered 7 percent of the popular vote in 1980? Colin Powell, a man many consider a viable third-party candidate in 1996?

Kristensen needs a lesson in civics. The Nebraska system is fairer than the antiquated system used by the rest of the country.

The entire system of electing the president would be better if the rest of the country would follow the lead of Nebraska and Maine.

On our terms

China must accommodate U.S. demands

The United States drew first blood Saturday in a trade war against China by imposing a 100 percent tariff on more than \$1 billion worth of Chinese goods.

China slashed back quickly, similarly taxing American products.

But the truth is that China and many Pacific Rim nations are bleeding the United States dry.

Trade imbalances are nothing new to America. The large U.S. trade deficits with Japan has been highly publicized.

At issue is rampant Chinese piracy of American software, movies and music. Many U.S. businesses are losing money as a result.

That's a very good reason to impose a tariff. The Chinese don't think so.

If that isn't enough of a reason, a quick look at China's human-rights record should provide one.

But human rights aren't even the issue here; intellectual piracy is. Both sides remain hopeful that they will work out an agreement.

The tariffs announced last weekend will not take effect until Feb. 26.

Administration officials have been using the delay to try to resolve the dispute; they have scheduled many meetings to discuss the relevant issues.

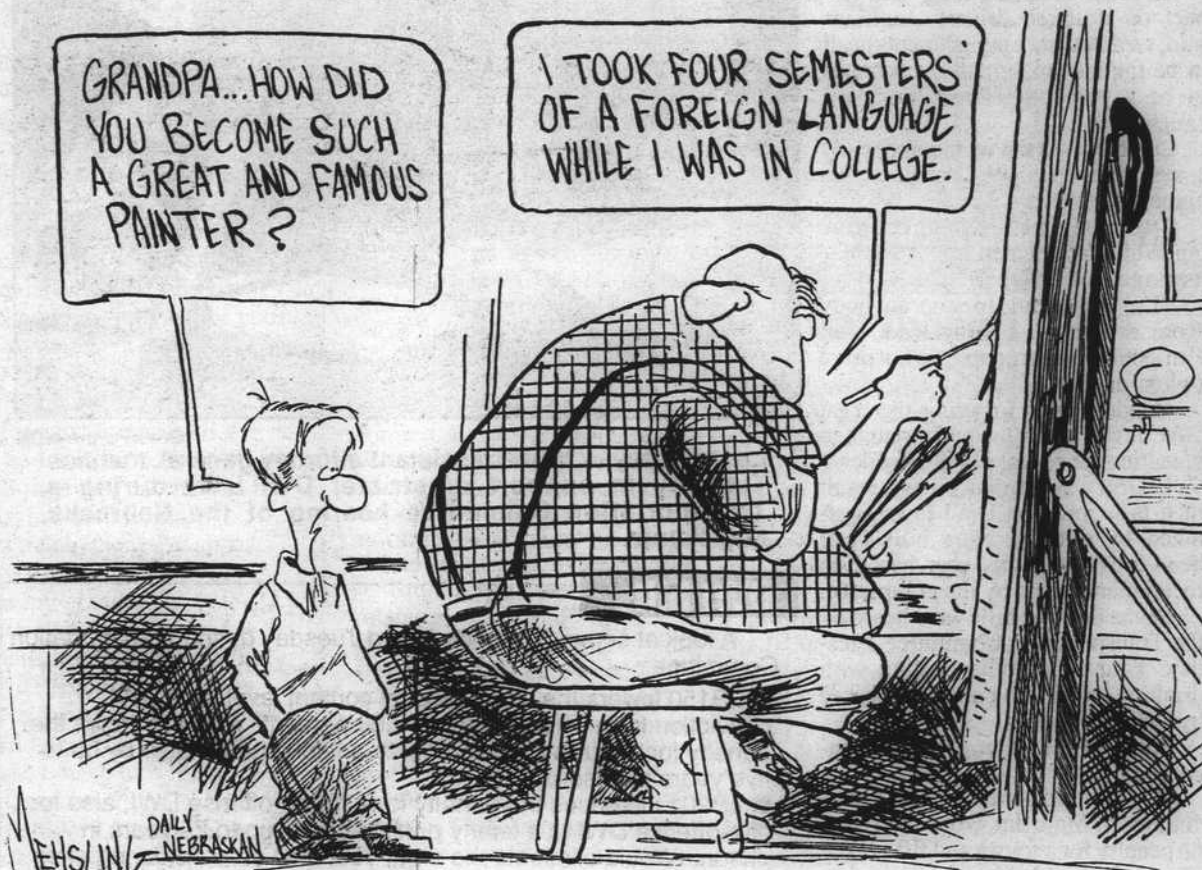
The United States should lift the tariff if, and only if, China does something to correct the problem.

Editorial policy

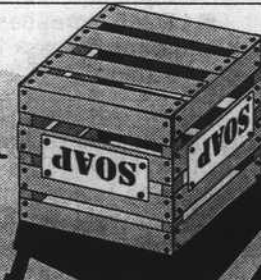
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Letter policy

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.



Daily Nebraskan readers say:



Send your brief letters to:
Daily Nebraskan, 34
Nebraska Union, 1400 R St.,
Lincoln, Neb. 68588. Or fax
to: (402) 472-1761. Letters
must be signed and include a
phone number for
verification.

'Strip Pool' ad

You do not have to believe that the nude human form is "smutty" to take offense to the "Strip Pool" advertisement in the Daily Nebraskan.

When you take a photo of a nude body and add it to a derogatory term, no matter how it is spelled, then you make the entire ad derogatory. This would be true if it is a nude female with an accompanying derogatory label, as the ad depicts, or if it is a nude minority male with an accompanying derogatory label. Just because the word "bimbo" is the title of a company and is spelled "Bimbeaux" does not change the fact that it is offensive toward women.

Furthermore, everyone in our society has an obligation to be aware of what might be degrading to any group of people, whether based on sex, race, nationality, etc. We must create a society that consists of different groups of people who can work together without feeling that any group is superior or inferior to another.

This will never be accomplished if we ignore such negative expressions as the ad placed in the Daily Nebraskan. I hope that in the future we encourage everyone to be more aware of such issues and not to ignore them. I also hope the Daily Nebraskan advertising office will raise its standards when placing ads in the newspaper.

Tonda Humphress
staff secretary
administration building

Kathy Omahen
graduate student
educational administration

Religion

At last, a voice of reason. Michael Justice's commentary "Abortion is woman's choice" (Feb. 6) hit upon an often-missed

truth in the abortion issue.

Regardless of my personal beliefs on abortion, I will fight for a woman's right to choose what happens to her body. After all, it is her life, and she has to deal with any mental and emotional consequences.

Thank you for realizing this truth.

Cheryl Kapa
graduate student
geography

Michael Justice

Three points in response to Michael Justice's spoutings (Feb. 6):

First, I will assume that Mr. Justice holds a "personal set of beliefs" by which he lives, and I will assume that one of those beliefs says that rape is a bad thing. I wonder what he would do if he chanced upon a rape in progress and tried to intervene, but the rapist objected on the grounds that it was not Justice's responsibility to impose his beliefs on anyone else who doesn't share the same view.

Second, I would suggest that before using something like the Jesus Conference as a reference, one should look into the background of said conference. Upon doing so, one will find that it is a group of religious radicals (of various denominations) whose views are taken seriously by very few people.

Third, did anyone notice how Justice referred to his friend's aborted baby as an "unborn child?" Curious, isn't it?

Darren Furasek
freshman
electrical engineering

Give a chance

I am writing in response to attacks made on the pro-life movement in the two commentaries published Feb. 6.

If there is one thing that both

abortion advocates and authentically pro-life people can agree on, it is this: The recent killings at two abortion clinics were heinous and inexcusable crimes.

Pro-life Americans, like everyone else, were horrified by the shootings and heartily disapprove of them. True pro-life advocates are nonviolent and will never support murder.

Surprisingly, perhaps, there is additional common ground between pro-lifers and abortion advocates.

And I would hope we could agree that 1.5 million abortions a year, over 30 million since 1973, is too many and that the 2 million Americans who wait to adopt a child deserve at least the chance.

That's all we're really asking for: give life a chance.

Gary Coulter
senior
electrical engineering

AIDS vaccine

I am responding to the article titled "Unintentional experiment implies AIDS vaccine safe" (Jan. 26). I think the vaccine should still be tested because it sounds as if it is still in the experimental stage.

Since one man caught a genetically weakened form of the AIDS virus from a possible vaccine does not mean the vaccine will affect everyone else the same way. Further testing of the vaccine needs to be done.

The article stated the vaccine causes AIDS when given to baby monkeys. Researchers are worried that a mother who receives this vaccine might pass the AIDS virus to her baby.

Something needs to be done about the problem before it gets worse. This vaccine might be the answer.

Noelle Sherrets
freshman
pre-med