

OPINION

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Daily
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Brain food

Subsidized tator tots mean tutored tots

A U.S. House committee approved a bill Thursday that would scrap the federal school-lunch program.

Rather than providing free and reduced lunches to poor families, the government would give money to the states to provide lunches. Federal nutrition guidelines for school lunches would be dropped.

The bill also would eliminate: a program that provides food vouchers to pregnant women, infants and children up to 5; a program that subsidizes meals for needy children in day care; and one that subsidizes day care for working poor parents.

This proposal would hurt children without helping anyone else. It also will hurt states. The federal grant would not take into consideration a state's individual needs. To meet those needs, states may have to raise taxes or scale down their lunch programs.

Our nation is struggling to find a way to help the poor without encouraging them to stay poor. The programs eliminated by the bill do just that.

The school lunch program works. It feeds hungry children so that they can learn. It is not a corrupted or abused program. Kids don't trade their tator tots for guns. They aren't selling their reduced lunches on the black market — not even on chicken-fried steak day.

For many poor children, lunch is the only square meal they eat each day. Being healthy is important for learning. Researchers have shown that even a slight nutritional deficiency hurts a child's development.

Furthermore, Congress will probably cut the country's most unpopular welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, this year.

Moving off welfare will be extremely difficult for America's poor. Eliminating other programs that help the poor will only hurt their chances at survival.

The House should vote on the bill by mid-April, as part of a package of legislation in the Republican "Contract With America." Yes, this nation must tighten its belt. Programs will be cut back and eliminated. But hungry children shouldn't be the first in line to sacrifice.

The well-fed representatives should keep that in mind when they vote.

Missed shot

Nee can't fulfill expectations

The Nebraska men's basketball team should be on its way to the NCAA Tournament. There's no reason why it shouldn't be.

Yet the Huskers are on a direct road to the National Invitational Tournament.

Husker guard Erick Strickland said everybody's expectations might have been too high — because of the football team's success.

But success should be expected out of the Nebraska basketball program, just as annual bowl trips are expected from the football program.

An NCAA trip is expected at Kansas, where Roy Williams has gone 13-5 in the tournament in six seasons. It's expected at Oklahoma State, where Eddie Sutton has won six NCAA games in four seasons. It's also expected at Missouri, where Norm Stewart has won 11 games.

Nee has won one game in the NCAA Tournament, but that was 12 years ago at Ohio. Meanwhile, he has won five in the NIT.

Maybe the NIT is where Nebraska belongs.

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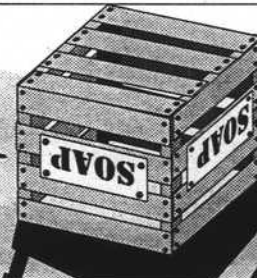
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Human development

I thank Jo Dilallo and Dennis McGucken for resubmitting their arguments to the Daily Nebraskan (Feb. 27). My previous letter also suffered under the editorial knife.

Before I submit my arguments once again, I would answer some of theirs. First, I was more than surprised by their retraction of what they said was perfectly obvious on a biological level, namely, "that a fetus is both a living and a human organism." Why so obvious before and so cloudy now? Are they manipulating their premises to fit their conclusions?

Second, law, whether it be civil or even canon, is not a sufficient foundation for rational argument since neither claim to be absolute and both are subject to revision. Canon law is revised as understanding of principle develops and the most obvious revision of civil law abolished slavery.

Third, on what principle do Dilallo and McGucken base that sentience and awareness constitute humanity? In this way, fetal humans with spinal and neural development are no different than fetal cats of similar development. Are you saying that aborting a fetal cat once such a level of development has been attained is morally reprehensible?

Thus, the crux of the argument. You continue to judge humanity based on physical characteristics, and will always fail in your attempts. What distinguishes humans from animals is the immaterial component, namely, the soul. The existence of a soul is not merely theological assertion, but was held by Plato and Aristotle and is held by the majority of humanity.

Because the soul is immaterial, it is linked to physical makeup but not bound to a particular aspect of that makeup. If a being exists, possessing a human genetic code and operating as a distinguishable whole, then it is human. Whether the function is highly developed,



Bret Gottschall/DN

e.g., possessing spinal and neural development, is irrelevant.

I repeat the point of my last letter: "Personhood (human dignity) is a direct consequence of human existence and not an arbitrary specification by one human concerning the ability, in any sphere, of another."

Matt Davis
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education

Racism

This letter is in response to the Feb. 24 commentary by Cal Thomas, "Leaders redefining equality philosophy."

It seems that nothing gets some Americans' resentment going faster these days than the buzzwords welfare and affirmative action. Sometimes I wonder if the way in which these words are used and the negative connotations attached to them cause more problems than the actual programs themselves.

I believe that far too often assumptions are made about African Americans as a whole that are just not true. Some African Americans depend on welfare, some may even believe that affirmative action is

doing them a favor (let's remember that some African Americans are not the participants of the welfare and affirmative action programs), but I am upset that the word "some" is not used at all in an article discussing controversial issues.

In my 11th-grade English class, my teacher fervently opposed my phrase when addressing another ethnic group regarding a certain topic when I said, "The _____ believe this." This type of statement implied that the entire group of whom I was speaking believed a certain way, and I really didn't have a right to say that because I had very little knowledge of these people other than my television viewing experience.

It seems that Thomas' assumptions are based on political and media rhetoric. The fact is many African Americans love their country while embracing their subculture and have always been and are hard workers (this is not a new and growing phenomenon as Thomas seems to imply).

Let's all get real for a change.

Racism does exist in this country, but not everyone engages in it. Yes, black people can make it without affirmative action as long as employers are willing to hire them for their qualifications and the content of their minds and do not revert back to the old ways.

I believe this may be what some people involved in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations may be afraid about. Colorblindness is a fallacy. The world is made up of different-looking people with different cultures; this is a fact. To ignore this is not being truthful to ourselves.

We all need to just accept each other as human beings (and bad and good human beings come in all colors). This will solve a lot of problems, I believe.

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