

OPINION PAGE

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Our
VIEW

Quite a gamble

Proposed tax cut lacks financial certainty

It was like spending an uncertain Christmas bonus without a dime in savings.

It was like putting a load of clothes and liquid Tide in the washer without three or four quarters available.

It was foolish. It invited trouble. And it could prove a rather slippery, unwearable mess.

It was a vote for a tax cut.

When the Republican-ruled House passed an \$80 billion tax cut on Saturday, it based that cut on projected federal budget surpluses.

The approving vote along party lines promised to give taxpayers money the government doesn't have. Republican Representatives swore they would mail a check when they knew they had no tangible checking account.

And they made this promise despite relatively prosperous economic times and high employment rates.

Perhaps they were simply exposing the president's weakness on Capitol Hill; the president has threatened to veto the measure if it passes the Senate.

Or perhaps they were stoking the fire beneath Senate Republicans, who earlier this year voted to cut taxes by \$30 billion over five years — a cut that sounded severe until the House upped the ante.

But, regardless of their reasoning, it's clear that logic was not a factor. That same good ol' common sense politicians like to tout in campaign ads and political attacks was remarkably void here.

While it's true that, given the superior nature of the economy in the last few years, we can reasonably expect a surplus of tax revenue, it's not true that we can know the exact amount of that surplus.

Just across the river in Council Bluffs, they call this gambling. And, in those lucrative casinos, they also know the odds of gambling: most folks will lose.

Of course, the cut does include cuts that will aid middle-class, married couples.

But it also includes cuts on rich folks' taxes, such as the so-called "death tax," a steep inheritance tax and the prepayment of a son or daughter's tuition at a private college or university.

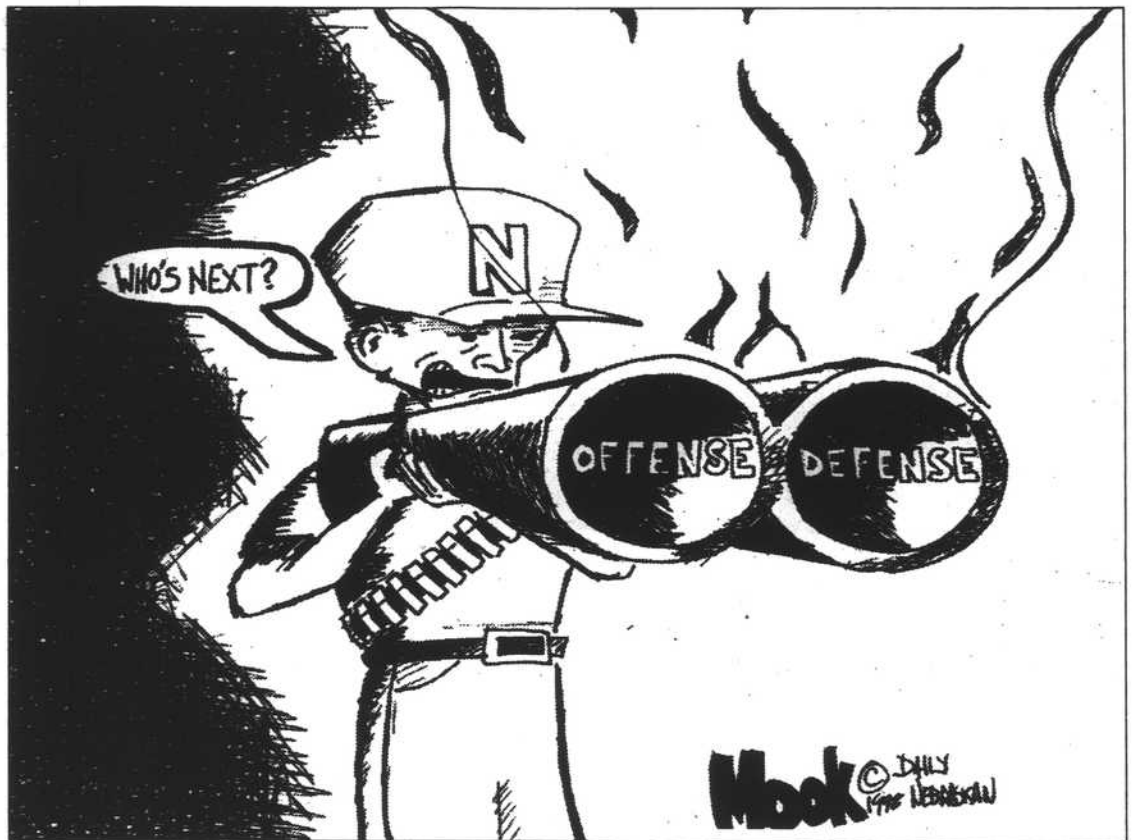
It raises the amount of money senior citizens can make and still receive Social Security benefits, but it spends the same surplus the president wants to earmark for saving Social Security.

House Republicans said, after the vote approving the tax cut, that they would leave intact most of a projected five-year, \$520 billion federal budget surplus.

The word of the day is: projected.

When Senators vote on the measure, we hope they don't bet on such weak odds.

Mook's
VIEW



DN
LETTERS

Stupid is as ...

Regarding Tasha Kuxhausen's remarks concerning the procreation of "stupid" people (satire, I guess), I'd like to point out that this "concept" is called eugenics.

Among those subscribing to it at one point or another was Planned Parenthood. Eugenic thought was, correct me if I am wrong, at least in part incorporated in Nazi ideology regarding racial purity.

I'm not making a case about today's Planned Parenthood being ideologically even remotely connected to Nazi ideology (of course not), but the eugenic view lives on in form of calls for "testing" someone's parenting skills, mandatory Norplant for welfare mothers; etc.

Having said that, I find your remarks careless and certainly not funny.

Werner Althaus
Nebraska ETV Network staff

The place of parenting

I may be pro-life, and I didn't agree with the editorial "Know the Risks" in Thursday's DN, but I'll accept the fact that others have different opinions. It's important to share these opinions because no matter what our stance is on this issue, we can all learn something. Unfortunately for anyone who read this editorial, the only result, at least for me, was the shock that this was even published.

Yes, there may be applications for PREVEN that could be considered beneficial, but advocating its use on "unintelligent" people to prevent them from "producing" children only reduces humanity to the level of animals.

And yes, the most ideal situation for a child to be raised in involves two loving adults who are financially secure enough to support their child, but this can't always happen.

The author implies that people outside of this situation don't deserve

the right to have children.

And this is to happen so taxpayers' money can be saved? I would hope the author wouldn't be so quick to divide society into two classes — those who are "fit" to have children and those who aren't.

After all, as the author stated, "I believe that women deserve the right to choose to become pregnant or not" — or does this only apply to financially stable women in a committed relationship?

Vanessa Silke
freshman
political science

Welcome to Shantytown

Shantytown is a representation of substandard housing. The UNL Habitat for Humanity chapter has emphasized throughout the week of Shantytown that we are not trying to represent homelessness. Habitat for Humanity deals with substandard and poverty housing, and that is the problem we are trying to correct.

Shantytowns exist across the world, including in the United States. The houses that people live in are made of any material that can be found, including tin, plywood, and, yes, cardboard.

People do live in these structures. In fact, the displays on the outside our campus chapter's Shanty gave more information about substandard housing. In the United States, people who live in shanties may be considered "homeless" by American standards. In other countries these may be considered regular homes. Either way, we know we cannot imitate and identify with that lifestyle. We just want people to think about it.

Students sitting in the structure were staffing the Shantytown. While they may have only sat there for an hour or overnight, hopefully when they sat in their warm homes later, they thought about the possibility of not having that warm home. No, they can't completely understand poverty

housing, but the hope is that they will think about it, and may want to help others in that situation.

I would encourage persons wanting to criticize our project to think about helping the situation instead. Part of the purpose of Shantytown is to raise money to build our campus chapter's first house. This house will help a Lincoln family who is living in substandard housing. This is not a "giveaway" house. Habitat works with the family in partnership by offering them an interest-free loan and both groups help with the building.

We don't pretend to know what it's like to be homeless or even live in substandard housing, and we certainly aren't "playing homeless" for an hour. At the same time, we hope we are increasing awareness of the situation of substandard housing. For more information about what Habitat does here at UNL, e-mail us at habitat@unlinfo.unl.edu or for more information about Habitat's work around the world, visit <http://www.habitat.org>.

Chris Stone
Shantytown co-coordinator

Whose habitat?

In regards to Mr. Sanford's letter in Thursday's issue (Street Sense), I would reply that he doesn't understand the purpose of the Habitat for Humanity project.

The people who sit in the boxes between Burnett and Andrews do not volunteer to "appease their social consciences." They volunteer to try to raise awareness and money for a worthy cause. The volunteers have no illusions about actually experiencing what it is to be homeless.

They simply want to get people to donate money. I would ask Mr. Sanford if he has donated his dollar.

Jake Wobig
sophomore
international affairs

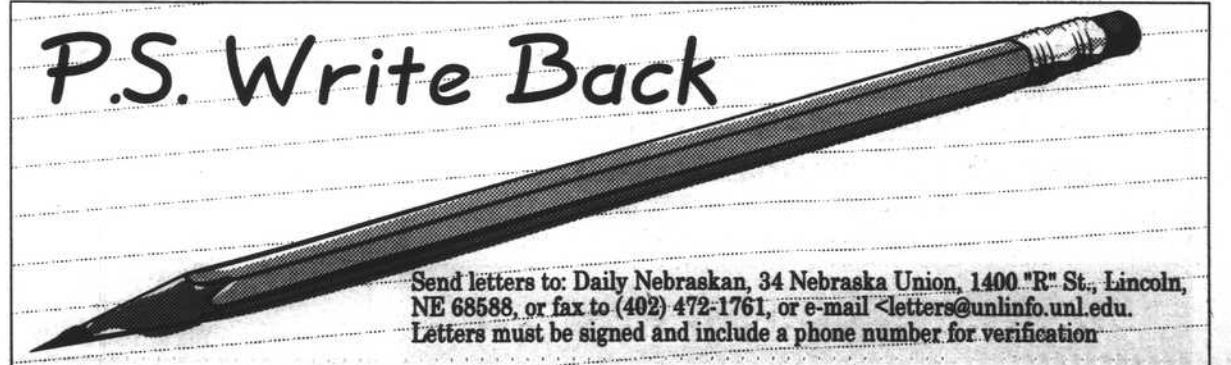
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