

# OPINION PAGES

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## Our VIEW

# Witch hunt or bill?

*Stenberg's stance on crime is suspect*

Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg is at it again.

Stenberg, one of Nebraska's strongest, if not the strongest, defenders of the crime-control model in the prison system, has developed two legislative bills, LB185 and LB186, along with Gov. Mike Johanns to further restrict prisoner's rights.

These bills would limit the opportunities criminals have to appeal a sentence. This includes any prisoner and any crime. Stenberg wants to limit the appeals to one based on state or federal constitutional issues. The petition has to be filed within three years of conviction. Otherwise, tough luck.

This bill seems tailor-made for prisoners awaiting execution. Randy Reeves is the first that comes to mind, as his execution was granted a stay after the Nebraska Supreme Court agreed to hear an argument on an appeal.

Stenberg, an iron-clad defender of the death penalty, seems to want to fast-track the execution of prisoners. It wouldn't make sense to direct the bill at normal prisoners. Stenberg is an advocate of maximum penalties for criminals, so it seems illogical that he'd care if criminals who will eventually leave prison wait longer to file their appeal.

No, these bills are basically designed to lessen Nebraska's value on life and kill criminals quicker. Too bad for Stenberg there's a legislature that must vote on it and a U.S. Constitution to refer to.

For Stenberg, it's about getting rid of frivolous appeals. But when someone's life is on the line, is any appeal borne of frivolity? Hardly. Of course, we must assume Stenberg has never done anything like argue a frivolous point. How many lawyers do that?

We also wonder what, at this point, Stenberg has to prove to the state. He's running for Senate. His reign as attorney general will soon be over so he can campaign. At that point, this will cease to become his issue. And it will be plopped down in the lap of whoever takes over.

Which is why Johanns should be careful to side with Stenberg. It might seem noble to want to lock up criminals and kill them as soon as possible. But eventually, it starts looking like a personal witch hunt and revenge for what both considered a personal defeat when Reeves was granted a stay.

It's risky to pass a bill for what clearly is a war on one man. This is in direct response to Reeves. If the bill is enacted, he might never be able to appeal again. Nebraskans should be wary of a policy that seems to be after one man.

## Horse's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### Honors housing hubbub

Neihardt has been specifically designated as honors for quite some time now. Did you ever notice it said "Honors Housing" in your housing contract? Historically, there have not been enough honors students requesting to live in Neihardt to fill it to capacity, hence some non-honors students were allowed to move in as roommates to honors program members or just to fill empty space. Now the demand for honors housing has increased to the point where the honors program and University Housing require these spaces (which are specifically designated as "Honors Housing") to satisfy their needs.

In an opinion letter printed Tuesday, Kylie Wolf and Kevin Francis said, "We don't want to be caught off guard when the honors board decides to turn our floors into honors housing." I'm not exactly sure where the Honors Program Student Advisory Board came into play here. They have absolutely nothing to do with this policy. Please don't make accusatory statements toward a group of individuals until you at least have a little more background on the subject than what you've read in the Daily Nebraskan.

If these individuals really want to live in Neihardt, why don't they just go down to the Honors Office (118 Neihardt, in case anyone cares) and apply to be in the honors program? You can apply as upperclassmen, just in case you didn't know. Maybe they don't have any desire to be in the honors program, but I still feel obligated to let them know it's an option.

Wolf and Francis ended their letter by calling the university fascist because it makes "regular" students pay for the honors program book scholarship. Following their rationale, I'm just curious if they think these so-called "regular" students should receive credit for the classes Regents' Scholars take because the money that pays for their tuition comes from the university as well.

Finally, all I want to say is those people who are being asked to leave have a whole year and a half. They even get preferential treatment to move to any other hall on campus. They can have their roommate move along with them, or if they are really adventurous, they can even move into a single. Sure, they might have to make some new friends or walk a couple of blocks to see their old ones, but this policy is definitely not inhumane.

In the future, I encourage you to do some research before you start jumping to conclusions and start screaming "fire" in the middle of a crowded theater (or residence hall in this case).

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### In whose interest?

If only the "national interest" could change positions as easily as the DN does, (Our View: Quitting Time, 1/25/99) on the perpetual bombing of Iraqi citizens, the United States might have an opportunity to save face in the Islamic world. Not even two months ago I was writing an opinion letter to the DN, criticizing and re-informing this U.S. ideological indoctrinating propaganda force, otherwise known as the popular press, as represented by our own DN, on the real nature of U.S. imperialism in Iraq. Glad to see that such a preponderantly hegemonic force as the DN Our View has come around to reason.

As for the rest of the moral majority in America, it's time to take responsibility for our government's "defending national interest" abroad. Don't we deserve to know whose interest is being "defended" exactly? It's not my interest. Is it yours? I have yet to meet someone whose interest is served by bombing Iraq, but then, I don't have any stock in Mobil or Exxon either.

How is bombing Iraq?



defensive missile sites (which are no doubt put there to defend the very citizens we vaporized this weekend) considered a defensive military action? I hope nobody still buys into that Orwellian doublethink (when bombing is called "suppression" and invasion a "defense"). Our government's historic, militant tendencies are still killing relatively defenseless people for our own national greed for oil and Middle Eastern land. This is why the U.S., more than any other nation, has recently been such a target for international terrorism.

Like Lauryn Hill says, "consequence is no coincidence." You reap what you sow; people do things for reasons. The U.S. was not selected out of a magician's top hat by Islamic fundamentalists to be terrorized by the bombings we saw this past summer in East Africa. It's U.S. economic- and military-sponsored terrorism that systematically places U.S. citizens abroad in danger. Thanks to our "national interest" abroad, when I go back to Kenya and Tanzania this summer, I have to put on a dummy out-back Australian accent to help avoid possible harassment, and that's just not worth it.

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