

# OPINION PAGES

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## Our VIEW

### English lesson

*Pronouns to become inclusive if bill passes*

"We, the people, ..."

The Preamble of the Nebraska State Constitution begins with this phrase. Notice just how inclusive this language is. It doesn't take a poet to appreciate the significance of the word "we" at the beginning of a document that is essentially the foundation of a democratic government. The authors probably spent a great deal of time choosing just the right words to begin this contract with the people.

It is too bad that commitment to inclusion isn't continued throughout the rest of the document.

The Nebraska Constitution is inconsistent in its use of pronouns. Sometimes it is inclusive and sometimes it is not. This creates problems.

LR11CA would help alleviate them. So, let us not misinterpret its purpose.

If LR11CA passes, the Secretary of State will be given the authority to go through the constitution, the next time it is reprinted, and make the pronouns gender-neutral.

This doesn't mean the Legislature is being overrun by a plague of "political correctness," nor does it mean that the old constitution has to be scrapped. The constitution is in a constant state of change. Obscure wording is frequently revised.

The problem with the constitution, as it is now, is that in some places a distinction is made between male and female pronouns and in other places only male ones are used.

For example, Section 12 of the constitution's Bill of Rights states: "No person shall be compelled, in any criminal case, to give evidence against himself, or be twice put in jeopardy for the same offense."

However, in Section 13, a distinction is made. "All courts shall be open, and every person, for any injury done to him or her in his or her lands, goods, person, or reputation, shall have a remedy by due course of law ..."

A literal interpretation of the use of pronouns in this sense would mean that only males are protected from self-incrimination, while both women and men have the right to use the courts to receive damages.

Maybe we should be concerned by the ambiguity in the document that spells out our rights.

Now some may argue that the male pronoun "he" means "he and she." But, in the context of the entire constitution, it doesn't. There are distinctions throughout.

And, let's face it, saying "he" means both genders is like saying the male appellation "dad" means "mom and dad."

Regardless of what our sixth-grade English teachers may have told us, women have every right to be offended by being linguistically erased, and non-inclusive language isn't very democratic.

## Lupo's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### It's MY business ...

Regarding Cliff Hicks' column on Feb. 15: I continue to be amazed when people, including many Congressional members, use the argument that what Clinton did was a personal matter and none of our business.

That might have been a valid argument if he had not been the defendant in a sexual harassment suit. But a judge ruled that a sitting president could stand trial, and he deliberately lied to protect himself in that trial, then went on to complicate matters until he had no choice but to admit to the Lewinsky affair. (Well, sort of admit - will we ever forget the line "it depends on what is is"?)

A harasser rarely commits the offense in front of witnesses. Therefore, in sexual harassment cases, establishing a pattern of behavior with corroborating testimony from other "victims" is often the only path a prosecutor can take.

That made Clinton's sexual behavior with other female subordinates very relevant. Clinton did his best to hide past behavior, and in the process, perjured himself and did much damage to individuals and to this country.

This was not a case of having committed a private, personal, "immoral" act and wanting to save his family the embarrassment. (He should have thought of that before committing the acts.)

Tell me, Mr. Hicks, what do we say to the next sexual harassment defendant if we find out he/she lied under oath about past sexual behavior with a subordinate? Oh well, if it's good enough for the U.S. President ...

Pam Murray  
UNL employee

toys that promote violence or anything sexual, but look at Teletubby Tinky Winky. It's a friendly pear-shaped toy that was designed to look like a toddler in pajamas. What negativity could possibly come of this?

People say, "Well, he's purple and has a triangle on his head." As far as I know, the color purple and a triangle are not only symbols for homosexuality. They remain a very popular color and a three-sided shape.

My point is, stop being so sensitive!

Damon Wilson  
sophomore  
fine arts

### Prosecute this!

I am writing in the hope that I may put an end to the debate regarding Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey's decision to deny both Thayne Glenn (hair length) and Stacy Williams (potential litigation between employer and Lacey) an opportunity to participate in the Criminal Clinic at the University of Nebraska College of Law.

I, as a law clerk with the Lancaster County Public Defender's Office, am also not allowed to enroll in the Criminal Clinic - for the same reasons cited by the various Lancaster County Attorney law clerks in their Feb. 15 letter, "And STAY out!" Unlike Glenn and Williams, however, I have never complained about my preclusion from the clinic.

Perhaps that is because I know something which all the important players in the dispute have forgotten (or never knew in the first place), and is best represented by the following question: Who the hell would want to be a prosecutor anyway?

Matt Catlett  
third-year law  
student



### A tubby by any other name...

Something stupid has come about. Rumor has it that Teletubby Tinky Winky is gay. My friends talk about it, newspapers have articles about it, and I've heard discussions about it on radio morning shows.

First of all, how can a Teletubby be gay? I didn't know that such creatures created for the fun of toddlers and little kids could have sex, or even think about sex. You can count on the public to take something fun and clean meant for kids and turn it into an unnecessary adult controversy.

I agree the public should question

MATT HANEY/DN

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