

# OPINION PAGES

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## Our VIEW

### The right to protest

*Case of free speech supersedes disagreement*

Protesters should be allowed to protest — regardless of their good sense.

Our country was founded on ideals of free expression, free choice and freedom from a government deciding for its citizens.

**“We must allow the messages we don’t like, don’t agree with and may even be disgusted by.**

That means we must allow the messages we don’t like, don’t agree with and may even be disgusted by. In Lincoln, that means we must allow abortion protesters outside our churches.

That is the price we pay for the freedom to express our own views.

Last fall our City Council passed an ordinance limiting protests and placards on church grounds throughout the city. The council sought to stifle one pro-life group that vigilantly picketed outside Westminster Presbyterian Church for almost two years.

The protesters from Rescue the Heartland carried poster-sized pictures of aborted fetuses they used to thrust in the faces of the churchgoers each Sunday.

It could have been your church.

The protesters were there because one of the church elders was performing abortions, and Rescue the Heartland wanted to draw attention to that.

The protesters’ antics got plenty of attention, very little of it positive, and their message was mostly lost in the outrage over their tactics.

When the council was considering the ordinance, the city attorney said the rule would be deemed unconstitutional.

The council passed it anyway.

So the protesters appealed.

Both the U.S. District Court and 8th Circuit Court of Appeals have declared the rule unconstitutional.

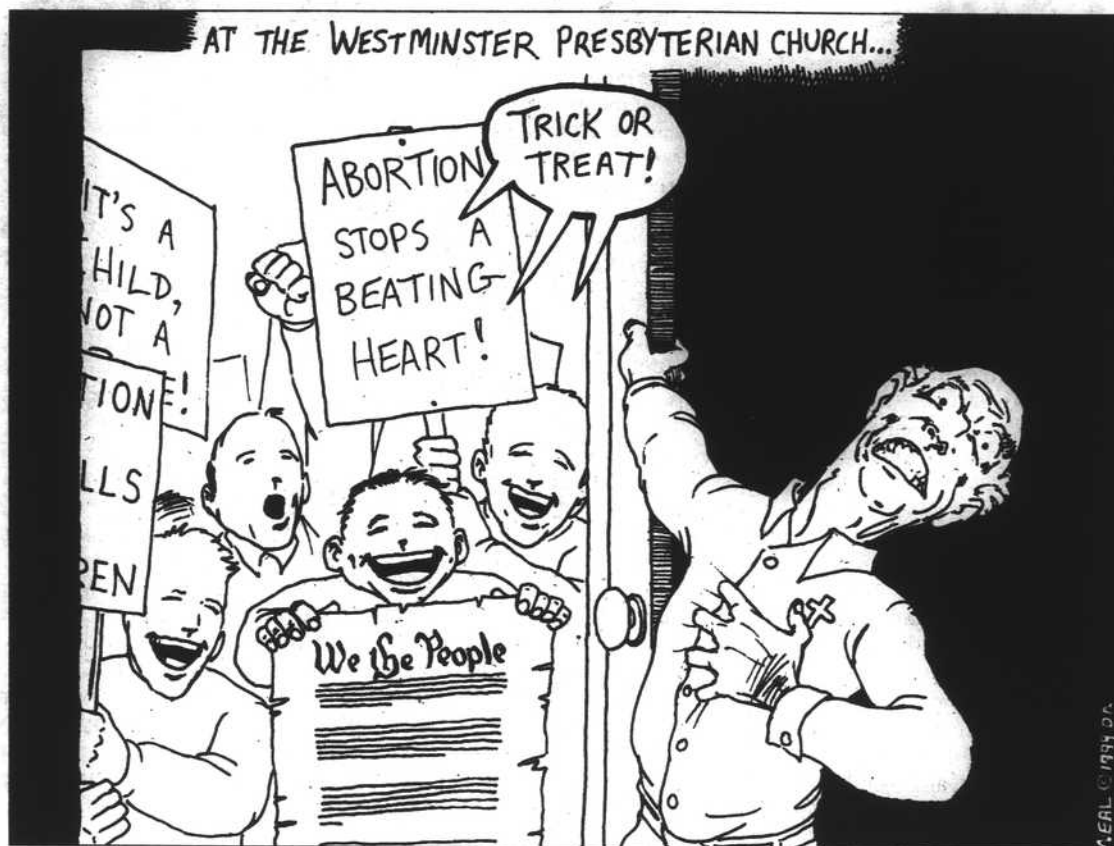
Yet the city is planning to appeal this latest ruling to the full Appeals Court in search of more guidance on how to write a more constitutional ordinance.

Maybe they should have listened to their city attorney in the first place.

These abortion protesters have the same right to express their views that Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan enjoy. They, and the ACLU, can all hold marches (though we shouldn’t schedule them on the same day).

Governments must find a way to ensure that one group’s views do not infringe upon another’s rights, but silencing that group is never the solution.

## Obermeyer's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### The Gay Agenda

Ms. Flanagan is correct in asserting that there is a homosexual “agenda.”

As a 33-year-old gay male and non-apologist for the community and what we have achieved, I am here to stand up and proclaim to all the world the gay community’s radical agenda (you may need to sit down for this):

We are pursuing full, productive lives with good jobs, loved ones and nice homes. We are caring for our aging parents, paying our bills and taxes and keeping our cars in good shape.

We are supporting our churches, making beautiful music, writing inspiring and meaningful literature and laughing a lot with our friends.

All this, and we are gay, too!

**Scott Biehle**  
Information Services

### Reading Matter

Jessica Flanagan would do well to research what she writes about. She feels that the study done by the APA on pedophilia gives a green light to it. Further, she blames gay people for this, claiming that accepting gay people is just a hop, skip and jump away from accepting pedophiles.

She is wrong on both counts. If she would go and either read the study or read the press release that the APA put out on this study, she would know that it in no way sanctioned pedophilic behavior (thank God). It simply said that some boys aren’t completely devastated by the assault (which implies

that some are).

As for the expansion of morals, there is one huge distinction between gays and pedophiles — gays can give consent, where children cannot. Case closed.

**Gary Rimar**  
Shelby Township, Mich.

### The Two Jessicas

Kudos to you, Jessica Flanagan! I thought your column was right on target.

Thanks for standing up for The Truth.

And to Jessica Eckstein, GREAT column the other day! (DN, Oct. 13) PRAISE GOD that a column viewing Christianity as a positive thing finally hit the opinion page.

Keep writing Godly articles. I and other Christians in my campus ministry have been praying for the DN for several months.

Keep being bold!

**Betsy Severin**  
sophomore  
broadcasting

### Bitching and Moenning

I would like to respond to Josh Moenning’s column regarding hate crime laws. (DN Oct. 12)

When a person commits a crime, his or her intentions play a large part in deciding what the charges and the appropriate punishment will be.

This is obvious; it is why there is a difference between manslaughter and first-degree murder and the accompanying punishment if the defendant is convicted.

In a way, this means that a criminal’s “thought processes” are on trial, but it does not require “psychologists acting as lawyers” to examine the intentions of a criminal — it is simply the prosecution’s burden to prove this to the jury.

The [hate crimes] law is not specific to minority groups whatsoever. In fact, one of the first hate crime cases involved a group of black men who, after seeing a movie, went out and assaulted a white man because they had the intention of singling out a white person (you can learn more about this case from the ACLU).

I understand why some may see hate crimes as simply vehicles for

political correctness, but they simply are not.

**Corey J. Maley**  
senior  
computer science, math,  
philosophy, psychology

### More on hate crimes

I believe that Mr. Moenning and many other opponents of bias crimes sentencing guidelines — for that is what we are actually speaking of — have an honest concern.

But it is wrong to assume that the premise behind the laws is “silly,” to use Mr. Moenning’s word.

If history — including recent history — had not shown that perpetrators of bias crimes are among the most unpunished (often successfully deploying such sickening defenses as “gay panic” and “racial fear”), you may be sure that very few people would be spending the time and money to lobby for these laws.

Meaningful punishment with attendant publicity represents society’s decision not to look the other way.

**Tom Crisp**  
New York, NY

### Another Masterpiece

I always look for KB Masterpiece (DN, Tuesdays) to see what nugget of wisdom I can get for the week.

As someone who attended the same high school as Karen Brown, I can only imagine how much courage it took for her not only to come out to her family, but to write about coming out in general.

We all should applaud her for having the type of courage that most of us don’t have. Way to go, Brownie!!!

**Sean Lewis**  
graduate student  
sociology

### Wetter is Better

In response to Trevor Johnson’s “Wet and Powerful” (DN, Oct. 6), I would just like to thank him for writing a very thorough article about the subject of alcohol on campus.

I think he has a very valid point and that the issue should be brought before the board or at least taken to ASUN.

**Rich Cappel**  
general studies  
freshman

### Editorial Policy

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## Yackety Yack

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