

The citizen's right to know *Bill would make obtaining public information easier*

Freedom of information is crucial to preserving those freedoms we, as Americans, hold most dear.

Our freedoms of the press, speech, expression and assembly rely on our knowledge of what government is doing.

In a government of the people, for the people and by the people, the people must be able to access the documents and reports of their government officials.

Each state allows its citizens access to records and documents belonging to the state, county or local government or agency with certain exceptions.

In Nebraska, those record holders are required to allow any citizen to examine public records and make notes from them, but there is no provision for obtaining copies.

Nebraskans also might run into trouble when requesting records that are kept electronically because our public records law does not make provisions for some of the different storage formats.

For those citizens who might want a copy of a record in an electronic format to do their own analysis, there might be additional difficulties.

Some record keepers have not been forthcoming with documents that all citizens are entitled to view.

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LB628 aims to remedy those concerns and ensure that Nebraskans will have easy access to public records.

The bill introduced by Sen. Kermit Brashear and prioritized by Sen. Jon Bruning awaits discussion on the floor of the Legislature.

If passed, the bill would require record keepers to respond to all requests within three days, and if the record cannot be accessed, specify the reasons in writing.

The bill also provides for photocopying and obtaining electronic records in the format they are stored in.

Access to public records has been pressed by media organizations, but this access is important to all citizens.

As the media work to keep a watchful eye on government, public records are an important tool.

But all citizens have a right to access public records to find out how much their high school basketball coach makes or what their city council is considering adopting or how much the chancellor of the state's largest university makes.

Public records are an important tool for citizenship. Use them to take advantage of the freedoms our government has granted us, and support LB628 to ensure all citizens proper access to public records.

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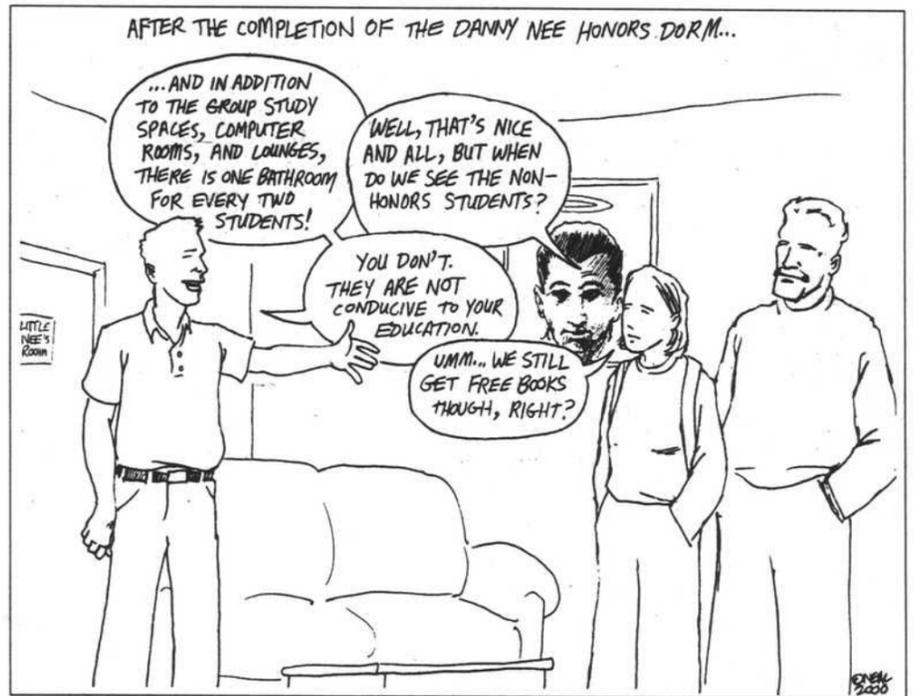
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Obermeyer's VIEW



Letters to the EDITOR

Wise propaganda

Having attended the "Creationist Propaganda and the Geologic Record" lecture, I am convinced that geologist Donald U. Wise is very knowledgeable. He brought up many concerns about the scientific conclusions of some creationist geologists. Mr. Wise strongly states that creationist geologists purposely are misleading and that their science is not "true" science.

His lecture gave the impression that creation science is being taught dogmatically and corrupting students of science. It would be interesting to know how many of the 200 in attendance in his lecture ever have heard a creationist science lecture.

He cautioned those who might desire to debate a creation scientist not to, because "they know their material and are clever" and could "hand your head to you on a platter." Is he suggesting that the geological record he presents as "so obviously clear" cannot hold its own to the "clever" arguments of a creationist geologist? Are college students so easily misled that they cannot determine good science for themselves? If so, then all the more reason to have both sides presented so that students learn to discern good science from bad science.

Wise seemed alarmed by the attention creation science is receiving. He started his lecture stating the origin and meaning of the word "propaganda." It means to propagate the faith. He gave an example of a creationist museum in Pennsylvania that has received 700,000 tourists in the past year at about \$15 per person. This was to show how much money it was raising in propagating its faith.

Let us consider how evolutionist scientists propagate their faith. These 700,000 people freely chose to pay money to tour this museum. Contrast this to the hundreds of thousands of students on our nation's campuses required to take courses, where both the textbooks and instructors proclaim evolution as a given. This includes courses such as history and education aside from those we normally consider as the sciences.

Undoubtedly, every student has heard the evolutionary view of the sciences, for that is what is taught dogmatically in our public schools and

universities. What percentage of our nation's students ever has heard in person a creationist scientist? College students are required to take classes presenting the evolutionary view and to pay several thousands of dollars in tuition if they want to get a degree. If that student is pursuing a master's or doctorate in the sciences, a creationist viewpoint becomes a severe handicap. He or she will receive much ridicule, as Wise had everyone laughing in ridicule at creationist science during his lecture.

I would suggest that both sides are "propagating a faith." Students (and everyone else) would be best served by having both sides presented - each without slandering or ridiculing the other. Most scientists - both evolutionist and creationist - are sincere and do quality research.

James Wiebelhaus
UNL alumnus
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Politics as usual

The attitude expressed by Jake Glazeski (DN Feb. 25) that he was rooting for Sen. John McCain (even to the point of actually considering exercising his political power by voting for him) because McCain doesn't seem to represent "politics as usual" is the single most ignorant political statement I've ever heard - Glazeski's accusations of ignorance on the part of South Carolina voters notwithstanding.

It is a gross error in logic to argue that one should vote simply for change. Voting for the status quo is a vote that says "I like the way things are now, more or less." It is a defensible position because we all know how things have been (or at least believe we do).

Voting for a change simply to make one is to say, "I don't care what the change is - I simply know it's different from what we currently have." This implies that the current political situation is so bad that any change at all would be better. If you believe that, get out of the country while you're still able.

Second, Glazeski is wrong in portraying the political status quo solely as a product of the rich. Yes, wealthy

people and corporations certainly exert more authority on the political process than do average citizens. But that doesn't mean the average citizen doesn't bear all the responsibility for the current political state.

For one thing, it is the common voters who allow themselves to be bought by advertising dollars. For another, the common voter supports the status quo far more often than Glazeski thinks.

One good local example is term limits. By and large, corporations don't lobby nearly as heavily against term limits as they do against anything else (presumably because they know their political authority will continue regardless of the office holder). Yet term limits are resoundingly crushed every time they appear on the ballot. Why? Because the common voter is convinced that the mythical Washington politicians must be defeated - but not at the expense of their trusted, people-serving representatives. This is a simple but powerful statement in support of the status quo.

Finally, we come to Mr. Glazeski's "mild rebellion" against politics. The United States is a federated republic, with the basis of political responsibility falling on the shoulders of the voters. Your choice not to vote isn't a rebellion; it's acquiescence to the will of the voters who did take the minimal time necessary to familiarize themselves with the candidates.

Because you live in this magnificent country, you have the freedom to complain about politics as long as anyone is willing to listen to your ill-thought-out, sound-bite-ridden complaints. What you do not have, however, is any moral authority behind your complaints.

Your position is foolish. Every election in recent memory has featured such low turnout that if you and your fellow sideline-sitters would just get out and vote, you'd get your vote for change. (Although you might be disappointed by how little actually DID change in that event.) Low voter turnout is one of the keys to "politics as usual," Glazeski. If you really do want to stop it, wake up and vote!

Eric Odgaard
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psychology

P.S. Write Back

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