

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Defining flaw Amendment includes more than just gay people

Over the summer, some of Nebraska's most conservative and Christian citizens worked on getting signatures in support of the Defense of Marriage Amendment.

The amendment states: "Only marriage between a man and woman shall be valid or recognized in Nebraska. The uniting of two persons of the same sex in a civil union, domestic partnership or other similar same-sex relationship shall not be valid or recognized in Nebraska."

No matter how people feel about the topic of gay rights, this amendment is flawed. Severely.

And these flaws will most likely translate into a Nebraska Supreme Court case if the amendment passes.

After talking to three lawyers in private firms and the Nebraska American Civil Liberties Union, one major problem with the amendment becomes clear.

The term "domestic partnership" has already been used in Nebraska state law, but its meaning is very different from two gay people living together.

Instead, it refers to two people within the state of Nebraska who have formed a partnership to run a business.

In most cases, this form of domestic partnership occurs between a father and a son who enter into a partnership to run the family farms.

Technically, the passing of the Defense of Marriage Amendment would nullify such partnerships. So the conservative farmers who signed onto the petition to keep marriage pure may in fact have to go to courts to fight for the partnership that runs their family farm.

Another possible court appeal could come from a student at this university.

Currently, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln offers students the option of purchasing insurance that would cover their domestic partner.

If this amendment passes, the contract the student signed with the insurance company could be deemed illegal. Lawsuits could ensue from that breach of contract.

This amendment would most certainly bar public institutions such as UNL, the city of Lincoln and Lancaster County from offering domestic partner benefits to their employees. But the impact that this amendment would have on private businesses is unclear.

Qwest, one of Nebraska's biggest telephone companies, currently offers its employees domestic partner benefits. If this amendment passes, they could potentially be banned from providing such benefits.

That could cause Qwest to lose some of its workers and hinder them from hiring apt workers.

The Chicago Tribune recently reported that nearly one out of 10 businesses around the country offers domestic partner benefits to attract the best workers. Businesses need to be competitive, and this amendment could hinder their ability to compete in Nebraska.

Regardless how strongly people oppose gay relationships, the flaws of this amendment cannot be ignored.

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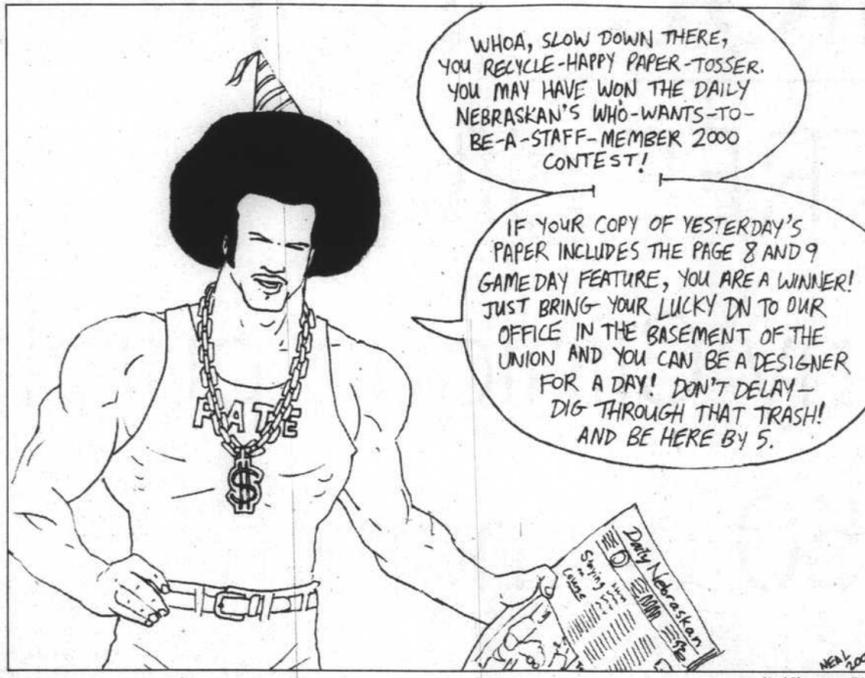
Sarah Baker, Bradley Davis, Josh Funk, Matthew Hansen, Samuel McKewon, Dane Stickney, Kimberly Sweet

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Neal Obermeyer/DN

Using liberty as an excuse for stealing

You, your friends, your parents and your children, all have one purpose in this life.



Jake Glazeski

To live for others.

It's as if there was an IV directly from your young, vital veins, into the arteries of the failures of society—the old, the poor, the sick. The government takes money from every paycheck you earn and gives it to others—others who haven't earned it, who don't deserve it. And you simply don't have a choice.

The ethic of the unearned runs through our society as an unsaid social more: What, you don't think children deserve health care? You don't think the elderly deserve to have their debts repaid? And we nod and we nod, yes, yes, implicitly giving into the ethic because it comes as second nature.

That's how politicians get away with their promise packages; that's why we elect them into office. We believe, secretly and deep down, that we live for the dying.

Our government no longer ensures the liberty of the individual. It does not care so much any more about ensuring the sovereignty and security of person and property, upon which any rational set of laws must be based.

Now it serves as a way to take your money and give it to other people, that can't or don't have as much money as they "need." The only question politicians face these days is, how severely can they restrict your rights while bleeding you for society's debts?

They get away with it because we have accepted the ethic of the unearned. We think that individuals "deserve" a certain base-level quality of living. All deserve an education, health care, to have enough to eat, regardless of their ability to pay or their commitment to taking on personal debt. It is a part of our everyday mind; the elimination of poverty, by whatever means, is seen as ultimately "good."

What we don't think of is the price of this "goodness." Poverty among the elderly is bad, its elimination is good, so we build a large entitlement program called "Social Security."

But at what cost? A seventh of every paycheck, a day out of every week, a month and a half out of every year. Hundreds of millions of vital, working Americans have no choice but to give a portion of their life to the old, those that have come before, that have shaped the system to their own optimum advantage.

People scoff. They say: "It ain't that bad." But the assumption at the base of it is supremely atrocious. No one deserves to be shackled into slavery from birth for the unearned benefit of others. No one should be taught that he or she has an inherent original debt which cannot be erased, cannot be fulfilled. Indeed, for our generation, our debt to society will increase as a generation retires.

Jefferson was onto something, but he stopped short of what could have assured us liberty to this day. I hold this truth to be self-evident: No man should live for the means of another man; no man should live in a system of unrequitable debt and interminable servitude. Where Jefferson stopped short, government has blossomed, like the egg white through the cracked shell of a hard-boiled egg.

We have the freedom of speech—to a point. We have the freedom to bear arms—to a point. These freedoms are constantly infringed upon by our government because we have accepted the fundamental assertion that we live for the community's end.

Our freedom to earn, which is fundamental to a free society, is already gone.

The constitution was never meant to delineate our rights—it was meant to limit the government's. But now we are pushed constantly to the final borders of the Bill of Rights, fooled into thinking that our stranded isolation to these few amendments constitutes "liberty."

It does not, and we must speak now before this country is destroyed under its own gluttonous weight. We tap the rich to help the poor—we bleed the healthy to feed the dying. And this process will lead to this country's collapse.

When are you going to wake up to it? When our nuclear subs begin to crash on the Pacific Ocean floor? When we can't put out a fire on top of the Sears Tower? When Microsoft is replaced by a bunch of sniveling software companies in a court-mandated, government-approved antitrust move in the realm of the "free market?"

The only way to avoid the grim future the Republicrats are leading us to is to vote and to become active. The only way to ensure your freedoms is to devote yourself to them, and to notice when they're being infringed upon.

We must do it, if we want to live.

Letters to the editor

Oh Neal...

Read the cartoon in the August 31 edition of the Daily Nebraskan. I read it five or six times, and I just do not get it. Is Neal Obermeyer trying to make fun of Jay Mohr, the university or huskers.com?

Jay Mohr is a first-class comedian. He was a cast member on SNL and currently is the star of his own sitcom "Action." He is the only act that UNL has brought to campus that is capable of exciting students.

His imitation of Christopher Walken is legendary, and mocking his brilliance is far from comical.

It seems like a good idea to broadcast Jay Mohr's show on the Internet. If UNL wants to become a first-class university it has to try new technologies, this seems like as good an opportunity as any.

For one, I am incredibly excited that UPC has stepped up to the plate and brought in a top flight act, and I can't wait for Oct. 24.

The biggest joke in Neal Obermeyer's Aug. 31 cartoon is his poor, confusing, pathetic sense of humor.

Jamie Q. Tallman
English

In the chair

Is America truly a democracy? How can we feel free when there are so many "Americans" doing all that they can to suppress those who are different? In a democracy, civil rights do not depend on whether one's beliefs or policies are a matter of choice, nor do they depend on how popular those beliefs are.

If one's religious beliefs were ridiculed and suppressed the public would be outraged. However, punishing someone based on his or her sexual orientation must still be morally acceptable.

Kellie Wulf
Freshman
Pre-law

Fruits of anger and Prozac

She wrote a poem called "Sister Prozac and Carousel Rides."

It was a long poem about dealing with depression.

Ever since I heard her read it I've been scared.

I've been having problems with depression. I get negative and sad.

But the worst part is the anger.

I hit walls and slam doors when I can't take getting hurt, when I can't take life's ignorance.

But I never get help because I don't want my parents to see my depression because I'm still innocent to them.

So her poem had extra meaning.

It didn't make sense.

It had extended description, and it flowed like a meandering stream, through rocks and vegetation, eventually reaching a cliff where it dropped into the unknown.

It scared me, partly because it hit close to home and partly because I didn't understand.

So when the creative gray head began overanalyzing a book report that overanalyzed some poet who committed suicide, my eyes turned to Sister Prozac.

The big plate-glass window was positioned behind her, the cheap drapes flung open. The incoming sun caused her face to look like a shadow, but I could still see her face. The first time I'd seen it without glasses.

She has a pointed nose, sharp cheekbones and stringy red hair. She's not ugly, she's just different. And small.

Her eyes shifted quickly looking side to side. She was fidgeting with some sort of paper. It ripped and she held it high above a plastic container, which safely guarded a warm pink object.

Out of nowhere, an explosion of crystals fell from her hand. Each particle of sugar caught the sunlight as it fell into the plastic container.

I was riveted to the scene. How bizarre, how surreal.

The explosion seemed to last forever, leaving me anxious. I felt like I was aboard a roller coaster plunging down an enormous drop.

I wanted to scream to make it stop, but I wanted it to last forever.

By now, I had figured out that the warm pink object was a grapefruit.

I could smell the bitter sweetness purely on memory.

It took me back to mornings at home. The simple mornings during weekends, Christmas break and summer.

I'd crawl out of bed to smell muffins and coffee, and there would always be a grapefruit cut in half with



Dane Stickney

a thick layer of sugar on top, made with love from mom.

And I'd eat the fruit and celebrate my days of innocence.

That was before the depression.

When I came back from my memory, Sister Prozac had picked up a spoon and was planning her operation.

She tilted her head gently to the left and examined the lifeless pink heart in front of her.

Like a surgeon, she quickly thrust her scalpel into the organ and turned it around, scraping out its insides.

I squirmed. But she looked to be enjoying it.

She got a quirky little smirk on her face, which disappeared each time she paused to look back at the gray head.

After the surgery, she lifted the sample to her mouth and quickly swallowed it.

How could she swallow such a powerful piece of fruit, so quickly?

She then moved in for another and yet another sample until she was satisfied.

She then picked up a blue lid and sealed off the contents of the container, leaving a hollowed out cavity. As I came back to life, I looked to my right at the gray head, still analyzing poets. But he had missed the real poem.

Sister Prozac had just done something incredible with such precision, such detail. But he missed it.

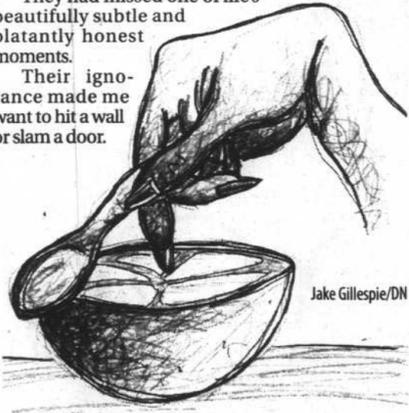
I looked to my left and the student with earphones missed it, too. He had his eyes closed.

I looked back at Sister Prozac, and she was looking at the gray head's paper.

She had missed it, too. They had missed the moment of beauty that keeps the aging star of life from collapsing on itself, causing a black hole—a gaping space of nothingness.

They had missed one of life's beautifully subtle and blatantly honest moments.

Their ignorance made me want to hit a wall or slam a door.



Jake Gillespie/DN