

## Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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## Political Systems

### Getting rid of electoral college won't make elections easier

Today, in the wake of the mess that the 2000 presidential election has become, normal folks and talking heads alike are calling for the abolition of the electoral college.

On CNN, MSNBC, at the dinner table — thousands of voices united in their opposition to this antiquated system.

Hold on. While the electoral college may seem to be a gross violation of common sense at first glance, it isn't that simple.

In fact, changing the system would alter the entire political landscape of our country. Before making snap judgments about any alternatives to the current system, let's take a step back and look at just what we would be getting into.

The main alternative suggested to replace the electoral college is the popular vote.

It is simple, to the point. There are no designations by state or district.

*But supporters of the popular vote system may be failing to see the far reaching political implications of changing to one person, one vote. Any decent political scientist will tell you that a popular vote system will create many splinters from the current two-party system ...*

The popular vote is somewhat beautiful in its simplicity. A North Dakota vote counts as much as a California one.

A Nebraska Democrat, for instance, could have helped to elect Al Gore to the presidency. With the electoral college system, he or she did nothing more than make Nebraska look a tiny bit less conservative, a hard task these days.

But supporters of the popular vote system may be failing to see the far reaching political implications of changing to one person, one vote.

Any decent political scientist will tell you that a popular vote system will create many splinters from the current two-party system, especially if the winner is required to receive a certain percentage of the vote in order to claim victory.

So, if a candidate doesn't get the required percent to win outright (40 percent is

often suggested), there must be a runoff election between the two highest finishers. This means that those splinter groups, which often mean little now (although the Green Party obviously did Tuesday), will suddenly have more influence.

The major parties will have to cater to the splinter parties' demands in order to gain their support, and therefore, their votes.

We could, of course, just give the presidency to the winner of the popular vote, however many votes they received. This, then, would open up the possibility that the President of the United States may be a person that not only the majority, but the vast majority of people, did not vote for.

Had you thought of all that? Neither had we, until Tuesday. We're not saying that the electoral college is an infallible system. We are saying that every system is fallible, whether the political analysts and mailman recognize it or not.

#### Editorial Board

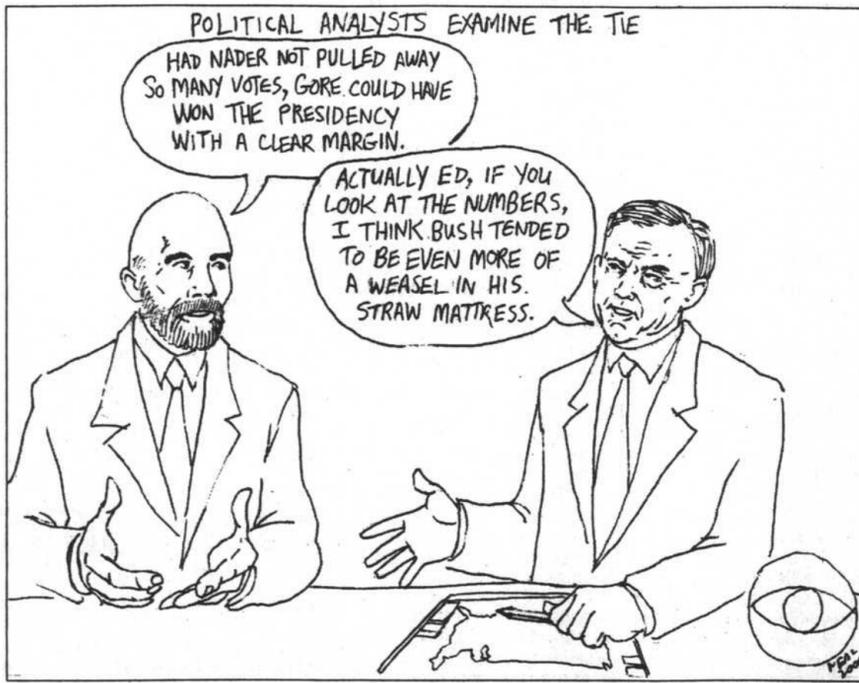
Sarah Baker, Bradley Davis, Josh Funk, Matthew Hansen, Samuel McKewon, Dane Stickney, Kimberly Sweet

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#### Editorial Policy

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### Letters to the editor

#### Recall electoral college

We, as United States citizens and conscientious voters, need to take a look at the voting process. The idea of the Electoral College needs to be reevaluated. It is not only archaic, but clearly does not represent the majority of the citizens who vote.

This year's election shows that discrepancy. Gore leads in the popular vote, but due to the Electoral College he may very well lose the Electoral vote.

The position of the Electoral College has been challenged many times over the last several decades. It does not represent the popular vote in reality. We need to reform or abolish this institution.

The United States was founded on the idea of democracy. We may be a republic now, but the ideas of our founding fathers still hold true with the majority of the citizens. Majority rule means the majority of the voters, not the majority of the large states' allocated Electoral votes.

I urge everyone to take a look at this system, challenge it.

Rev. Philipp J. Kessler  
Lincoln

#### Does Bush have honor?

Until and unless all Florida vote irregularities are satisfactorily addressed, a person of Gov. Bush's "honor" should not accept the Presidency. Gov. Bush has insisted he is the candidate to return "honor" to the White House, that he will attain and maintain a higher standard. Let his actions now prove his words.

Will he adhere to the same high standard he has implied Vice President Gore has not? Gov. Bush has talked the talk; let him now walk the walk. Wait until all questions are answered, improprieties ruled out. If the election is tainted, will the quest be abandoned? Remember Governor, a Man Who Would Be President "Leads."

Roy Conant  
Portland, Ore.

#### A modest proposal

With the passage of the Defense of Marriage amendment, it's now time to move on to some new initiatives.

Since Nebraska voters have resoundingly voiced their non-acceptance of gay and lesbian relationships, let's get to work on amending the state constitution to simply outlaw gay and lesbian relationships so we never have to deal with this marriage thing again. I'm sure that initiative would pass in this state as well.

While we're cleaning up society and making it safe

and non-confusing for our children, what the heck, let's also ban all marriages between inter-racial couples and any marriage where one of the parties is more than 20 years older than the other. Let's also ban all secular marriages (if you don't know what secular means, ask your clergy member).

And do we really need to allow Jewish and other non-Christian marriages? Let's at least put it to a vote.

You know, since we'll already be campaigning, let's also work to ban all non-white marriages. Maybe all of the minorities in the state will concede and just leave.

There, that should do it for now. With these wonderful new initiatives, which would probably all pass in this state full of "do-gooders," we can really protect the sanctity of marriage in Nebraska. At least the marriages of white, Christian Nebraskans would be protected. And isn't it their rights that really matter in this state anyway?

Bryan L. Skalberg  
Lincoln

#### Winning the war

Everyday since June I have been engaged in a battle — a battle against Initiative 416, trying to convince youth that this initiative's intent was not about "protecting marriage" but about stripping away personal freedom, fundamental human rights.

This is the first time I write a letter to the editor regarding this initiative. I write because I harbor incredible gratitude to the hundreds of youth across the state who have helped myself and other coordinators of United Students Against 416.

Please remember that we may have lost the battle, but we will win the war. To this end, I encourage all of you to stay involved. No law that the "Christian" Right proposes can "legislate love."

Do not be fooled by "the Lord did this" to heart. Indeed, it was not "the Lord" at all, but \$600,000 from the Mormon church in Utah. Is it not curious that according to the theology of fundamentalist Christians believe that both homosexuals and Mormons are going to hell?

Bitterness, though, won't help us in our fight. And, our fight is about nothing other than the freedom to love. To this end, we can find encouragement from the Bible that is so often used to damn. "The greatest commandment is to love." Jesus said that. He also said "though shalt not judge." So, take heart, and do not allow the so-called "Christian" Right to "steal Jesus" who is the epitome of love and compassion.

Angela Clements  
junior  
political science/history

## A lesson in self inspection

In the middle of the clinic room, on the edge of my mind, there's nobody but me here.

What does "me" mean, anyway? I'm hoping you can answer that, petaluma. I feel the necessity to strip away all the pretensions of what has come before and just deal with the truth, whatever may come. In thinking, and your direction of my thinking, I dropped down to nakedness. Come to terms, so to speak. This is your directive. And my truth, as you've written.

The truth is I am beautiful.  
The truth is I hate it.  
The truth is nobody has ever told me how to handle it.

The truth is everybody expects me to already know.

The truth is I'm barely holding on here.  
The truth is that beauty trades on itself, like a bartering system, like its own currency. The truth is that it serves as a burden to maintain, because there's no greater shame — is there? — than beauty lost.

The truth is the beautiful are the damned. That we are your tiny pawns to slip through the wringer time and time again, to exact your revenge upon for whatever slings and arrows you've borne for your lack of physical fortune.

That you've come to me, petaluma watson, in this vision of elongated perfection is a ruse, your penetration, a subversion of my confidence. I get it. Make me want what they want of me. Put me in a position to be degraded and humiliated like what? Like you once were? Maybe. Except your perversion takes me further; this display is like a hall of your horrors, all your secret desires — porcelain dolls, dancers, plotting sickos who prefer to float jars of puke down a river. Plastic creatures who dab their



petaluma  
watson

suckers up and down. Soft, cooing mermaids who breathe and raise their eyebrows dramatically.

This is your lesson to me, is it not? I'm reading you, reading me. For what purpose this plan? Oh, sweet, sickly perfect little pawn, it remains to be seen.

Drawing the shades is such a kick isn't it? To darken the hopes of a universe where I, even as a character, could find hope in a happy ending. What pain would there have been in my pleasure? Would it have hurt you? Taken away from the enjoyment of creating this tale. If I feel as though I've been used, almost uniformly, by all that surrounds me, the purples, the yellows ... and I know now that you've placed me in this two-color universe on purpose.

I understand Calvin, the cowboy, my fate conspiring against me, turning scenarios upon me. And Nadia, my Nads, my teacher, sage and counterpart in bulimic devastation.

I'm becoming self-aware, I suppose that's the term, to the situation that surrounds me. That the clinic is a set. That Nadia's house is right next door. That the scenes like water mirages on the highway, paint right before me. You, petaluma watson, as you've been deemed by yourself and now, me, whom you must deem your own, are the painter. I am the object, the canvas, this room, or any room, or no room at all, just maybe my dreams. Or whatever.

You've put me in the position to see it. And excuse me, but I hold a brewing curiosity as to why. What doors that have been unlocked to me reveal others. I come closer and closer into view, a reality from the abstract, from simply beautiful to physical traits of height and weight. Am I, petaluma watson, a figment of your perceived perfection? Do you, like, want me? Are you allowing my ego to drive to the force of this column for your lack of will? Has your motivation been worn down? Is all that is left within a need to relent?

Where are you taking me? Or maybe, you're signaling, it's time for me to take you.  
My dear literary mother, may I?

## Body image never equals perfection

Thursday, March 30, 2000.

She refused to eat. She refused to listen. I was a resident assistant. She was a resident. I was upset. She was more so.



Emily  
Moran

She told me to leave her alone. I did. But all I could think about was her. Her thin frame. Her hollow face. Her size two.

I wasn't obsessed. But I felt responsible for her. Salad. Salad. Saltine cracker. Water. Salad. She dodged floor dinners. And me.

I offered to help. She rejected me. I left her alone. She never reached out. I think she was ashamed for someone noticing. I was ashamed for not doing more.

Saturday, Oct. 14, 2000.

I was alone for the night. I decided to tackle the bedroom closet. I tried on clothes for hours. I sucked it in. I tried to fit.

I counted what remained. Five sweaters. Ten shirts. Two dresses. Four skirts. Three pairs of jeans that fit. Six that didn't.

I had gained eight pounds in three months. I wanted to fit into these clothes. But I couldn't. I was too fat for these clothes. I felt out of control. Defeated. Bloated.

I thought I would be sexier if I was thinner. I thought I would be happier. I thought I would be in control. So I had to choose. Did I want to be anorexic or bulimic?

Neither appealed to me. But I craved control. I could be a perfectionist anorexic or a genius bulimic. I chose neither. But was frustrated. I wanted to be thin. I thought I needed it.

Monday, Oct. 23, 2000.

I double-knotted my laces and headed to the second floor of the Rec Center. I was going to run. Run off the fat.

I entered the second floor. I sucked it in. I didn't want the others to notice me. I was ashamed that I needed to exercise. I regretted wearing shorts.

I sat on the other mat and looked at the person next to me. She was hot. She had a tight figure. I should have worn sweats. I wanted to be her.

She did 50 crunches. I did 12. She did 50 more. I wheezed. She touched her toes. I touched my knees. She did 50 crunches. I quit.

I spent two minutes on the Stairmaster. I was so tired. I returned to the mats. I recognized a runner. This person was thin. Rail thin.

I knew her. She was beautiful. But she looked sick. Her weight didn't match her bone structure. Her eyes were sunken in. But she smiled. She smiled at me. I stared.

She was in control. She was not defeated. Or bloated. She was happier than most. But I knew better. I knew she shouldn't be running. She should be eating.

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2000.

I am not perfect. I want to be perfect. I want to be thin. But I'm not. I think I will be happier if I am thinner. But I should be smarter than that.

I refuse to be anorexic. I refuse to be bulimic. You should refuse, too.

