

BOARD EDITORIALS

CAMPUS CONTROL

The government shouldn't punish private institutions for turning away military recruiters because of their "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

With each passing month, U.S. military commitments across the globe seem to increase in number as turmoil and fear spread on an international level. First our government sent soldiers to Afghanistan, then to Iraq and now to Haiti. Top military officials are pushing Congress to pass legislation that would facilitate college recruitment practices and effectively bully institutions of higher education into acceptance of those tactics.

The armed forces wants to pack their military ranks with the brightest minds of our generation by way of questionable tactics, if necessary.

Last week, a bill that seriously could bolster the U.S. military's student recruitment arm cleared the House Armed Services Committee.

HR 3966, known as the ROTC Military Recruiter Equal Access to Campus Act, would deny certain grants from the Central Intelligence Agency and the Departments of Transportation, Homeland Security and Energy to any university or college that treats on-campus military recruiters differently from other potential employers.

The resolution likely will head to the House floor for debate sometime this week.

The ROTC recruitment act is meant to augment the 1996 Solomon Amendment, a similar law that denies federal funds to college campuses that bar military recruiters altogether.

A number of law schools are challenging the proposed legislation. The Forum for Academic and Institutional Rights, an association of 15 law schools across the country, has filed a lawsuit against the Defense Department. FAIR is challenging the new recruitment plans on the grounds that they violate the nondiscrimination principles of the American Association of Law Schools.

"Don't ask, don't tell" is at the crux of the fight. By limiting access to military recruiters, many of the nation's colleges and universities are challenging ide-

ologically what many perceive to be a discrimination policy sanctioned by the U.S. government.

Public institutions ultimately are helpless to fight the recruitment policies. After all, schools such as UNC are public institutions funded by taxpayer money. School officials have no right to bar any group or organization, for ideological reasons or otherwise, from having access to the same facilities and services as any other group.

The problem with the new bill lies in its treatment of private schools.

Private institutions have every right to control who has access to their campuses and can bar recruiters based on ideological principles. This fundamental protection from state or federal oversight is one of the key advantages private institutions have over their public counterparts.

At the same time, the government does have the right to deny funding to anyone who turns away its military recruiters. The question is whether it should.

The consequences are twofold. Some critics argue that schools that cave to the Solomon Amendment unwittingly become agents of the military's discrimination policies, and by denying federal funds to obstinate private schools, the government is setting a dangerous precedent in terms of strong-arming academic institutions.

Schools — public and private — shouldn't base their career-advisement policies on fears that the federal government could pull their funding for critical research programs.

At the same time, colleges and universities need to learn how to pick their fights and not to deprive students of worthwhile career opportunities in making political statements.

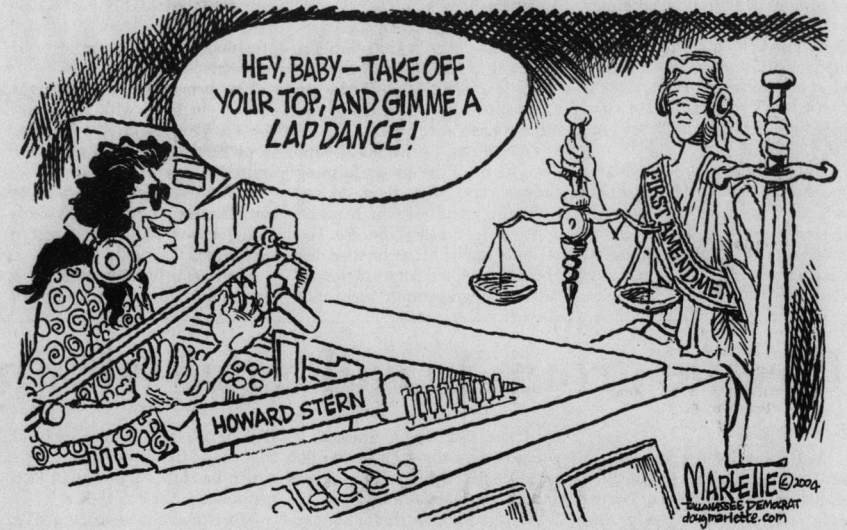
While the U.S. government shouldn't hold potentially beneficial research money hostage, universities shouldn't deprive our nation's military ranks of prime officer candidate material simply to make a point.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Private property began the instant somebody had a mind of his own."

E.E. CUMMINGS, POET

EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

Community college system underrated, underfunded

Once again, tuition hikes are placing negative attention on our state's network for higher education — the 16 universities that compose the UNC system.

Fiscal woes that have set in during recent years are proving long-lasting, forcing students to pick up the tab where state appropriations have failed to provide.

But lost in this media coverage of a sad period in higher education is serious talk of similar funding dilemmas for institutions that more broadly spread the geographic spectrum of the Old North State.

Yes, our community colleges also are bleeding, and there's no bandage readily available to mend these wounds.

According to a press release issued last week by the N.C. Community College System, enrollment rose from 150,844 to 180,568 full-time equivalent students between the years 2000 and 2003. Meanwhile, the system is not receiving enough funding to handle these growing numbers.

The release states that the Office of State Budget and Management already has asked state agencies to prepare for budget cuts of 3 percent, which would put an even tighter strain on the community college system.

These institutions will continue to suffer unless we address a systematic neglect of our community colleges.

Everybody is clearly feeling the economic squeeze. We got spoiled during the boom years of the 1990s, and we are still somewhat in shock over the relative thriftiness we've been forced to impose on state-subsidized programs.



MICHAEL DAVIS
COUNTRY FEEDBACK

But our neglect for the community colleges often seems more extensive than simply monetary scrimping: There's a stigma many attach to these schools that reeks of academic elitism.

I guess it's almost expected when you have such a strong state system of colleges and universities, which prepare students for more service and business-related occupations.

Growing up in Charlotte, snickers followed talk of attending "CP," or Central Piedmont Community College.

That might've been high school jibber-jabber, but I think this general tendency to look down on community colleges extends past the 12th grade, and it's a shame.

One wonders if this image is encouraged by guidance counselors pushing students for "the best," when the best might actually just be a couple years working and attending the local community college.

After all, some will move on to a larger university later anyway. Many people can't attend one of the UNC-system schools, because of family commitments or other obligations.

And some think they can't because of the perceived cost of these institutions. One hopes such programs such as the Carolina First campaign will fight successfully the idea that not everyone can go to a four-year

school. But on the other end, there are the folks who just don't find that type of schooling applicable to their educational needs, and that's fine.

For those content with two-year degrees, there's no need for the negative stigma that comes with this perfectly acceptable level of academic achievement.

Recently, the downturn in the manufacturing and textile sectors has forced many people back to school.

Community colleges are convenient and inexpensive options for new occupational training. Located in or just a short drive from almost any town in the state, these institutions offer everything from vocational education to foreign language training.

But, as another budget is drawn up, continued cuts threaten these students from being able to have these important opportunities.

According to the system's press release, cuts of 3 percent would take away more than 110 full-time staff positions, meaning another stab right at the heart of North Carolina's community colleges.

It goes on to mention the nasty reductions these cuts would cause to secretarial and continuing education services.

Despite the still-sluggish economy, we need to support these valuable institutions and bolster their images.

That can start with more funding, so that the community colleges can reach out to the many who need them for an education.

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EYES ON THE MONEY

UNC officials properly investigated a serious misuse of University funds. Now, it's time to make sure that such fraud doesn't reoccur.

Given the recent budget crunches faced by students, faculty, staff and UNC programs alike, many on campus understandably are concerned about their finances.

Hardly in that same spirit, two staff members in the Department of Radiology of the UNC School of Medicine scammed the University out of more than \$300,000 during the course of four years.

University officials handled the case well by launching an exhaustive 5 1/2-month investigation through the University's Internal Audit Department. The department's report blamed the misuse of funds on inadequate supervisory controls and loopholes in purchasing procedures that University officials already have begun to fix.

Administrators should be commended for releasing information about the incidents to the public. The case was a personnel issue, meaning they had the legal right to withhold that information, but officials helped to make the process transparent by waiving that right and opening up their financial proceedings to public scrutiny.

And while the matter was dealt with appropriately after it was discovered, it's clear that supervisors in the radiology department weren't vigilant enough and should be more careful in the future.

Procedural fixes are certainly welcome, but many of the problems could have been detected earlier and at multiple levels. In a glaring example, the radiology department paid four related parties about \$105,500 for moving services that would have cost University personnel only \$1,250.

At one point early in the scam, central operating controls detected one of these fraudulent payments, but the employee simply changed the name of the business used on the payment requests, and the department continued to employ the company on a regular basis.

The investigation finally was launched Sept. 5, 2003, a day after an employee at the University Mail Center tipped off the Internal Audit Department that one of the accused staff members came to pick up checks that should have been mailed to businesses contracted by UNC.

In response to the findings, the department overhauled its entire structure, created new oversight positions and hired a new manager, who started work Monday.

The reforms include new ordering procedures that require large contracts must now go through the Purchasing Department. Matt Mauro, vice-chairman of radiological clinical services, told The Daily Tar Heel on Friday that the money in question came from payments made by patients for clinical services.

He said the misuse was the business office's problem and has nothing to do with the clinical side of operations. He added that department Chairman Joseph Lee wouldn't have discovered the misuse because annual financial statements are all he sees.

"It wouldn't make a blip on the map," Mauro said. "In a \$15(million) to \$20 million budget, it isn't too significant. But you don't want to see anything lost."

UNC officials were quick to act, but additional oversight could have prevented the misuse in the first place. The incident should serve as an alert for officials in each of the University's department to double-check their budget sheets and account for all funds.

There shouldn't be an environment of distrust, but administrators should maintain a better watch over the funds they oversee.

The entire University community is having to deal with financial struggles. If administrators are going to be taking more of students' money, they had better be sure they're taking good care of theirs.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, and were reached after open debate. The board consists of seven board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2003-04 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

COMMENTARY

Blacks in search of the right policies, not party

Let's set the record straight: From 1865 on, Abraham Lincoln led the Republican Party that freed slaves and passed the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, laying the groundwork for a series of landmark civil rights cases almost a century later. Unfortunately, the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln is not the same Republican Party led today by George W. Bush.

For one to assume, as Brentley Tanner does in his column, "Republicans support blacks more than the Democratic Party," that African-Americans sacrifice their own personal interests to engage in blind loyalty to the Democratic Party is completely off base.

Like all voters, African-Americans have one thing in mind when they go to the polls: What have you done for me lately. And "lately" is not defined by events and milestones that occurred more than a century ago.

If you look at the history of political parties in the United States, one would see that around the time of the Great Depression, more than 30 years before the height of the modern civil rights movement, both parties started to switch places in regards to racial issues.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, a

BERNARD HOLLOWAY
MEMBER, UNC YOUNG DEMOCRATS

DIMIA FOGAM
MEMBER, BLACK STUDENT MOVEMENT

Democrat, initiated New Deal programs that provided employment to all without regard to race, and many of the projects completed by the "alphabet agencies" spawned a new age in African-American culture, including the creation of slave narratives and inspiration for the work of Zora Neale Hurston.

Harry Truman, Roosevelt's successor, integrated the armed forces and the civil service at a time when many black GIs entered World War II in the name of fighting for freedom, only to come home to insurmountable oppression.

And Hubert Humphrey delivered the keynote address at the 1948 Democratic National Convention calling for the immediate passage of federal civil rights legislation — an action that sparked Strom Thurmond to storm out of the convention on his way out of the Democratic Party.

At the same time, Republican leaders opposed attempts to integrate government offices, passed token — and even unenforceable — protections via the 1950s civil rights acts and waited to the last

minute, in the case of the Little Rock Nine, to intervene on behalf of students who were upholding the desegregation mandate of Brown v. Board of Education.

In fact, Tanner's greatest assertion, which states that "the Democratic Party formed the Ku Klux Klan," is only a half-truth. He fails to recognize that the same southern Democrats, who led the Klan at the beginning of the 20th century, were the fathers and grandfathers of George Wallace's segregationist supporters in 1968 and the prime targets of Barry Goldwater's "Southern strategy" to entrench Republican support in the South for decades.

So here's a wake-up call: Today's Southern Republicans — the ones who voted for George H.W. Bush because of "Willie Horton" ads and fear-mongering, race-based politics — are more closely related to the Klansmen of yesteryear than today's Democrats.

We'll concede that, on the whole, African-Americans are socially more conservative than the mainstream of the Democratic Party, adhering to family traditions and the tenets of the Christian faith more than most of their liberal counterparts. But just because people have God in com-

mon does not mean they'll share the same socioeconomic values.

Where is the Republican Party when it comes to health care? African-Americans die of preventable illnesses — heart disease, diabetes, cancer and even AIDS — at rates significantly higher than the national average.

Yet the barriers to health care equality are often economic ones, specifically the cost of prescription drugs and yearly checkups that are covered by most insurance companies. Will party leaders finally embrace a truly conservative concept by ending the virtual monopolies that exist on prescription drugs to allow more people access to the care they need and deserve?

Where is the Republican Party when it comes to criminal justice? An entire generation of black males, no older than we are right now, will be lost in the next 10 years to prison incarceration and the associated problems with rehabilitation.

Every day our society allows the problems of racial profiling, discriminatory drug laws and mandatory minimum sentencing to segregate our criminal justice system. Are Republican Party leaders ready to address this crisis in the black community? And will there

be attempts to use prevention instead of "tough on crime" policies that amount to locking people in jail and throwing away the key?

For hundreds of years, African-Americans have kept their eyes on the prize: receiving the economic and educational equality that we have long been entitled to. Those are our goals. Those are our issues, and we're prepared to support whoever will stand up for us.

So the question for Republican leaders is: What have you done for me lately?

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TO SUBMIT A LETTER: The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu.

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