

# COMMENTARY

## THE TAR HEEL

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## ERA yes

We wish we could offer a few of these recalcitrant state senators the firm handshake, the friendly hand on the shoulder.

"You made a mistake," we would urge quietly. "You can still make it up."

In fact, by waiting this long to approve the Equal Rights Amendment, the anti-ERA senators—if they still have a majority in the Senate—have given themselves the chance to do much more than just make up for past ERA rejections. Proponents are concentrating their efforts on four states—Illinois, Florida and Oklahoma, in addition to North Carolina—in their 11th-hour campaign to get the three states needed to make the amendment law by June 30. If North Carolina ratifies it first—and North Carolina apparently will consider it first—the other two states needed are likely to follow, especially given the strong reputation for soundly moderate politics that North Carolina enjoys.

None of the arguments against ERA is as good as the ones for it. The ones the Senate opponents are relying on aren't much good at all.

1. My constituents don't want it.

Your constituents want it. The recent Louis Harris poll showing that 61 percent of voting-age North Carolinians now favor ERA was not put together by calling 801 people randomly selected from the UNC-Chapel Hill student telephone directory. If the people sampled in the poll had been the only people voting in North Carolina in 1980 they would even have elected Ronald Reagan by a slightly larger margin than the 49-47 plurality he earned, according to the poll results.

2. I campaigned on a plank opposing it.

If your constituents want it, you should support it anyway—unless there is some other argument for opposing it. This week in advertisements in the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and the Wall Street Journal, the National Organization for Women went public with a disturbing charge that had been made privately by front-line ERA activists for some time: that some business interests, not people like Phyllis Schlafly, have been the real strength behind the campaign to defeat ratification, because some commercial interests profit from sexually discriminatory practices. We hope no senators are being swayed by anti-ERA arguments backed by such interests, if they exist.

3. ERA will have bad consequences.

Most North Carolinians don't think so, according to the poll. Most think it will mean that employers will have to pay women the same as men for the same work, that society will afford women higher status than it does now. Most DO NOT think ERA will mean that women will have to be drafted for combat or that employers will be forced to hire admitted homosexuals.

We agree. Whatever the courts eventually make of laws passed in light of ERA after its passage, ERA's most important, positive consequences will be in American hearts and minds, not in American legislative halls. If ERA is defeated those consequences might not come about. But if North Carolinians believe in their hearts and minds that these positive results will come about, then they will come about. And that is the strongest argument of all.

## A modest proposal for the Falklands

By LYNNE THOMSON

While browsing in a bookstore last weekend, I overheard the only sensible solution yet to the Falkland mess. "Simply give each of the islanders a million dollars," a man said, "and tell them all tough luck."

The man went on to tell the startled store owner that while he did not doubt the moral legitimacy of the British claim and the right of the people to be governed by the country of their choice, he was trying to be reasonable.

There comes a point in international relations when pragmatism has to take precedence over moral correctness. I am not saying that might makes right, but the cost of the Falkland situation is much higher than the worth of Britain's claim.

The Soviet Union is backing the claim of the Argentinians against the imperialism of the British who siezed the islands 150 years ago. This further polarizes the world situation and leads us all one step closer to disaster. In addition, the United States is losing credibility with other Latin American nations by siding with the British. Hence, we are becoming less able to influence the outcome of important policies in El Salvador and other countries because of this tiny crisis. The plight of the islands is simply not as important as the things it is jeopardizing.

The British are spending millions they cannot afford fighting a war that in the long run is not winnable. Britain should save her money and allow the United Nations to resolve the matter and, if necessary, resettle the islanders. If the islanders are deeply attached to Britain, they can go there. But they must realize that a declining colonial

## Running for judge: the unknown campaign

By CHIP WILSON

RALEIGH—The race for three seats on the North Carolina Court of Appeals is the only contest of statewide significance in the upcoming Democratic primary. But it has garnered little attention, either from the voters or the press.

But that hasn't stopped candidates from frenzied traveling across the state to Democratic party functions, bar association meetings and anywhere else where people will listen.

"Where there are two or more gathered together eating barbecue, I am in their midst," said District Court Judge Paul Wright, who is running for the seat being vacated by Judge Robert Martin.

Wright says his biggest problem is telling people there is an election for the appeals court which is second only to the Supreme Court in judicial authority.

"It's confusing for a lot of them because there are candidates running for three different seats," Wright says. "We haven't been getting the attention that the congressional and legislative races have been."

Once candidates make it clear what seat they are running for, they then have to explain what the Court of Appeals is, says Superior Court Judge Maurice Braswell, a candidate for Judge Edward Clark's seat.

"It takes me an hour to explain the court to them. Then the person usually says 'Oh,' and I take it from there," Braswell says.

Issues are few in the Court of Appeals race, because of a Code of Judicial Conduct, which forbids candidates from announcing their views on disputed legal or political issues. It also restricts the manner in which a candidate may raise money to solicitation by a committee he appoints.

Ideally, the restrictions would eliminate the politicking that most want to keep separate from the judicial selection process. But Raleigh attorney Sidney Eagles, one of Wright's opponents for Martin's seat, says it doesn't keep people from asking their opinions.

"When people ask questions about ERA or other issues, I explain that I can't under

the Code," Eagles says. "They don't seem to understand that."

Despite the removal of the judicial race from typical political fray, the Political Action Committee of the N.C. Association of Educators endorsed one candidate for each of the seats and made subsequent \$500 contributions to their campaigns.

George Lennon, an assistant attorney general seeking the seat currently held by Chief Judge Naomi Morris, says this represents a special interest group trying to manipulate the judiciary. The NCAE gave its endorsement for that seat to Eugene Phillips, a Winston-Salem lawyer.

Answering Lennon's allegation, NCAE President John Wilson says it was only trying to educate its members about a race which deserves public attention.

"I think Mr. Lennon's attitude is hilarious, since he worked so hard to get out endorsement," Wilson said.

All the candidates say most of their support comes from people with a particular interest in the judiciary—lawyers, court clerks and the like. To hear each candidate talk, they each have every lawyer in the state on their side.

The problems associated with running for office in a low-interest campaign have led many states to begin "merit selection" of judges.

But Braswell, who as head of the North Carolina Judicial Conference once advocated merit selection, says he now disagrees with that idea.

"Now that I've been campaigning, I think it's important for judges to be directly elected by the people," Braswell says. "Their decision will always be the best."

Since this particular race has an unusually high number of candidates, it could very well prove to be an interesting test for the idea of direct selection. The interest voters show could either boost or bust the merit selection idea.

At present, however, Wright's observation seems accurate; "Most voters will probably go in to the booth and check either the first name on the ballot or the name that looks best."

Chip Wilson is a junior journalism and political science major from Gastonia.

power can not defend an empire half way around the world, and that the costs involved for the rest of the world are far too great.



Lynne Thomson, a senior journalism and political science major, is features editor of The Tar Heel.