

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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Bill out of bounds

Abortion resolution speaks for few

In a voice vote Wednesday night, Student Congress members unanimously passed a resolution supporting a woman's right to an abortion following the weakening of *Roe vs. Wade* this summer. It's hard to believe that congress finds it its place to debate abortion laws, and it's even more difficult to believe that this represents the views of their constituents. More likely, the vote served as a good way to get their names noticed by the General Assembly, or at least as a good resume padder. Regardless, it was inappropriate, unnecessary and unwarranted.

The code of student government gives congress three main powers: to deal with student activities fees; limited power to watch over elections and recall votes; and to make laws necessary and proper to promote the general welfare of students.

The code mentions nothing about congress members passing resolutions about general issues. Students voting for congress members vote for them mainly because of how they will allocate student fees and how members will represent them on campus issues. And abortion is not an issue that immediately comes to mind when discussing campus issues.

The resolution would normally be fairly meaningless, but this one may have more weight because of the amendment added by Mark Bibbs (Dist. 12) urging the N.C. General Assembly to uphold present abortion legislation. Bibbs said including the amendment would "help justify debating"

board opinion

the bill. But that is hardly enough justification. If anything, it shows just why it should not be debated — it takes on an issue that should not be confronted by this body. In this case, as opposed to most issues concerning students that go before state legislators, we hope that legislators will not take the bill seriously, that they *do* ignore what they're sent.

The vote seems to represent mostly the views of congress members and maybe a few of their friends. We doubt that many congress members talked extensively to their constituents about their stand on abortion, an issue that demands detailed discussion. And very few students knew their representatives' positions on abortion when they elected them.

Anti-abortionists and pro-choicers should be equally offended by this resolution. Activism on such matters should be undertaken by other campus groups acting on their own behalf, not on behalf of the entire student body. Even the executive branch would be a better source for this sort of activism — the student body president was elected to represent the student body on a much wider range of issues than were congress members.

Congress seems determined to expand its powers, and members may consider last year's nuclear weapons resolution somewhat of a precedent. But representatives should not consider it a precedent worth following. We hope this resolution gets no further than some secretaries' desks in Raleigh.

Keep Klan off roads

KKK should not get adoption rights

North Carolina's Adopt-A-Highway program, the largest in the country, offers a unique method for citizens to serve their state, but recent efforts to join the program by a local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan spell nothing but trouble.

The state transportation department is considering an application from the Rockingham County chapter of The Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan to adopt a two-mile stretch of a state highway, which the group would keep clean of litter through organized work on weekends. More than 4,500 groups now sponsor about 10,000 miles of state roads, and officials aren't sure if they have ever rejected an application. But the state should reject the Klan's request for a number of reasons.

Supporters of the Klan's request feel the group has as much a right to adopt a highway than any other group. This is true, but the effects of the Klan's support would be counterproductive to the program. State officials must consider the numerous citizens who would use the stretch of highway. Placing the Klan's name on a bright green sign on the side of the road would undoubtedly offend a majority of people, black or white. In all probability, angry motorists would simply dump trash on the highway to make more work for the Klan. Even the sign, a form of advertisement for the Klan, would probably be torn down such that their work would go unrecognized. In its best interest, the Klan should consider a better way to serve.

The leader of the Klan's Reidsville chapter recently said his group is only trying to do something good for the state, to help "clean up" North Carolina. But the group's first request was for a stretch of highway in Rockingham County located in a primarily black community. Certainly these North Carolinians were a bit concerned when the Klan said they wished to "clean up" the neighborhood. State officials realized the potential for trouble and persuaded the Klan to apply for a "white community stretch of highway."

A sign bearing the Klan name would also convey a bad image for the state, especially to out-of-state travelers. Imagine a northerner driving through and seeing the Klan sign; they'd see nothing but a small part of the South of which most are now ashamed. The Ku Klux Klan, regardless of its constitutional rights, is a group founded on hate and white supremacy — things which North Carolina should not advertise on the highways.

Klan officials say legal action may be taken if the state rejects the application. To avoid such a standoff, state officials should encourage the group to explore other less visible possibilities of service. The group's desire to help clean up the highways is admirable, but the group itself and all it stands for are an embarrassment to the state and too controversial for any good to result in this function. State officials should apply the Klan's efforts to another capacity while protecting the well-being of the majority of the people. — James Burroughs

The Klan's support would be extremely counterproductive to the program.

The Daily Tar Heel

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It's True!! Oil Spills Cause Brain Damage!



Readers' Forum

NRA shouldn't hide behind Bill of Rights

To the editor: I am distressed to see that National Rifle Association propaganda has infiltrated the DTH letters column. Of course, dozens — maybe hundreds — of sensible gun control laws have been passed, but they're ineffective as long as gun runners in, say, North Carolina are free to smuggle everything from Saturday night specials to AK-47's to drug gangs and ordinary street thugs in jurisdictions that have passed controls. Until we get tough national legislation — overwhelmingly supported by the public, by the way — local laws will have little effect in reducing the nation's appalling level of gun-related violence.

To my knowledge, not a single gun control law has ever been thrown out as a violation of the Second Amendment. The reluctance of NRA lawyers to challenge these numerous local statutes is clear evidence that they know damn well they wouldn't have a prayer in court. Whatever the amendment means, it doesn't give constitutional sanction to any right to blast your spouse with a shotgun, waste your neighborhood drug dealer or enforce and everyday street mugging. The NRA knows that but prefers to hide its sordid contribution to the American shooting gallery behind the

Bill of Rights. Shame on them. Your letter writers should know it, too. Shame on them, too.

ROBERT L. STEVENSON
Professor
Journalism

Right to bear arms not a guarantee

To the editor: I would like to clear up a little matter of some apparent confusion concerning what the Constitution does and does not guarantee. Perhaps many of you saw *Taps* and recollect Timothy Hutton defending his actions with the line, "The right to bear arms is guaranteed by the Constitution." Well, unfortunately, Tim was wrong, just as opponents of gun control who use the same argument today are wrong. The only thing the Bill of Rights allows for along these lines is the right of the individual states to maintain a militia (today's National Guard). The individual citizen is totally outside the scope of this amendment, and any argument using it as justification for the individual is completely invalid.

Therefore, without stating my own position on this issue, since it is not the purpose of this letter, I would tell those in opposition to gun control to find a new argument. This one will be shot out from under them.

JOHN STEPHENS
Sophomore
Psychology

Soldiers fought for ideals, not for flag

To the editor: I am writing in response to Hamlin T. Raney III. Despite his claims, expressed in his letter, "U.S. soldiers fought to preserve the flag" (Sept. 27), our soldiers have never fought for the flag itself, but for the way of life the flag has come to symbolize — a way of life that all too often has included imperialism, racism, sexism, slavery, widespread environmental irresponsibility and the subjugation, oppression and economic exploitation of entire nations. It is that way of life that those who burn the flag seek to so symbolically denounce.

Mr. Raney states that the "people who burn the flag are symbolically destroying that which gives them" the right to do so, and sees "this action as contradictory." Would he not also consider it contradictory for our government, in the name of "freedom," to pass an amendment curtailing individual freedom to protest actions of that government?

While asking several pointless questions about how important symbols are to various people, Mr. Raney misses the point underlying this decision and alluded

to in my first paragraph — that symbols mean different things to different people. To me, a burning cross generally means something very different, especially here in the South, than a protest of the actions of the church in front of which it sits. Because a Star of David has a certain meaning for Jews, does that mean that Rastafarians, for example, should not be permitted to wear the Star of David because their meaning for it is different? Moreover, is it our government's place to decide for us what the American flag will and will not mean for us and how we may or may not use it to express our viewpoints?

Mr. Raney is quite right in his assessment that many people, such as veterans, are undoubtedly incensed by this recent Supreme Court decision. I too am incensed by various statements, symbolic or otherwise, made by, for example, "hate groups." But feelings are not the basis for good law — principles are. And I will not stand idly by while the freedom to speak their minds of even those with whom I most bitterly disagree is eroded by the passage of laws to silence them. I am quite proud of the Supreme Court for standing their ground in this matter. Doing so has made them less popular, but allowing even unpopular views to be expressed is precisely what this issue is all about.

CLIFTON TROY TOTH
Staff
Student Health Service

Activist sold out by taking job with Helms

Debbie Baker Guest Writer

Since the end of the Civil Rights Movement, many of the former leaders have gone on to hold public office and participate in the government in many ways. For example, John Lewis, one of the former chairmen of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee, is currently a representative in the U.S. Congress. Andrew Young, who was active in the movement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, is currently mayor of Atlanta. However, in the newspaper the other day, I read something quite shocking to me about another former leader of the movement. James Meredith, the first black student to enter the University of Mississippi, recently became a special assistant to Senator Jesse Helms.

In order to understand the relevance of Meredith's new job, it is important to recall a bit of black history. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the "separate but equal" doctrine could not apply to schools in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954. However, blacks were met by white opposition when they tried to enforce the high court's decision.

James Meredith was denied admission to Ole Miss because he was black. He went to court with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as his counsel and again was denied admission. Everytime Meredith tried to enter the doors, he was met by a mob and several times he almost didn't get out alive. The governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, sometimes blocked doors to the university himself. Finally, President Kennedy sent U.S. Marshals to protect him after he realized that something had to be done. A riot broke out on campus in which two people were killed and 375 were injured. Meredith still had to be escorted to class by the marshals until tension died down.

After Ole Miss, Meredith became active in the movement. He started a march from Memphis, Tenn. to Jackson, Miss. in 1966 to give blacks the courage to register to vote. He was shot on the second day, and the march was finished by several of the leading civil rights organizations of the time.

With Meredith's situation in historical context, it may be easier to understand why his job with Senator Helms is such a shock. Senator Helms has not been an advocate of civil rights or civil rights legislation.

Helms has used the filibuster, which is unlimited debate in the Senate, to kill civil rights legislation. He voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which among other things prohibited segregation in public accommodations. He voted against an extension of the

Jesse Helms knowing how he views equality and civil rights for black people?

Two other facts that most people don't know is that Helms did not have a black person on his staff until 1984. He hired Claude Allen, a UNC-CH graduate after people began to talk. Also, the Klan supported him in his 1984 campaign. The Klan started a voter registration drive after he began to slip in the opinion polls.

While Meredith was trying to get into Ole Miss in 1962, his current boss was one of the people criticizing the movement. Apparently Meredith has not thought seriously about his actions. His taking a new job as special assistant to Jesse Helms goes against everything blacks worked for during the movement. Perhaps money and prestige were the key elements which caused him to turn his back on his people. Money and power can cause people to act in peculiar ways. It must be something strong which has caused him to make an about face on issues concerning black Americans.

It doesn't make sense that someone can supposedly be so dedicated to fighting for civil rights and completely change his attitude. Meredith risked his life and time again during the movement. It is amazing how you can let your people down when you've been a symbol of hope for so many years.

In recent years, Meredith has shocked audiences by calling integration a sham. He blames integration for creating hostilities between black and white Americans. These are harsh words coming from the man who defied tradition en route to writing a page of history on integration. Maybe Meredith was a hypocrite all along in the struggle for black equality, and today the real James Meredith has surfaced: one who only cares about himself.

What James Meredith has done all comes down to a matter of respect. As the first black student to integrate Ole Miss, Meredith had been admired by so many people. If he keeps his job with Helms, he'll lose the respect of his people. All of the fame and money in the world won't mean anything if no one respects who you are. Evidently, James Meredith respects Jesse Helms and will continue to respect him despite how black people feel. Black Americans will never have the full economic, social and political progress we deserve as long as we allow ourselves to remain content with our situation and disrespect our own people. With leaders like James Meredith, the black struggle for equality in all aspects of American life will never be over.

Debbie Baker is a junior journalism/pre-law major from Raeford