

## Obama's newest proposition overlooks important factors

By Burke Reed  
STAFF WRITER

Hey kids! It's time to strap down and get settled in your seats. President Obama wants to see you all spend more time in the classroom, so get comfy!

Obama has proposed an extension of days per year and longer hours spent in the public school systems in an attempt to raise test scores.

Although there is good intent behind the proposal, it ignores the factors that will inevitably counteract with any future plans for education reform. Obama should choose either an extension of school days or longer hours in the classroom, but installing both is problematic.

In a country facing one of the worst recessions in history, finances, or a lack thereof, play an important role in education. Obama has already proposed a \$255 million stimulus plan to help renovate and rebuild shambled schools. Funding for both projects will cripple taxpayers. If a school is to stay open longer, more money must be spent to keep it functioning properly. Since a school cannot operate without resources, wait until the next water or electricity bill comes in. How will taxpayers react then?

"This is yet another unfunded mandate and another thing for the public schools

to do," said Dr. Martin Handler, superintendent of Brandywine Heights School District of Pennsylvania to the Huffington Post. "We're having a difficult time, frankly funding our current programs."

Obama's proposal also overlooks teacher unions. From a

the effects that a school extension would have on children; mind you, these students are America's future. According to the BBC, researchers say that the average American child's schedule is already too congested. Rather than spending additional time in school, children need to focus on par-

ed to undertake between 16 to 21 years of education during their lifetime compared to America's expectancy of 12 to 16 years.

American students, however, spend more hours per year in the classroom. According to the A.P. American students spend 1,146 instructional hours per year compared to Singapore (903), Taiwan (1,050), and Japan (1,005).

Either way, students in Asian countries continually outscore the U.S. in math and science. Tom Loveless of the Brookings Institution told the Huffington Post, however, that a slight increase in time during math classes is the key to producing better scores. Through his own research he has found that extra time has helped students tremendously.

"Ten minutes sounds trivial to a school day, but don't forget these math periods in the U.S. average 45 minutes," Loveless told the Huffington Post. "Percentage wise, that's a healthy increase."

Our education system needs to join the ranks of others in the world and quickly as to not fall further behind. Making small progressions such as choosing either additional days or hours will help us get there but dramatic alternations will only hurt America's communities and wallets. America needs to think small to get big results.

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personal observation, teacher unions are difficult to cooperate with. Making changes within their contracts usually sparks months of controversy and are rarely resolved, if ever. The teachers' union within my home state, for example, is one of the strongest in the country. The local government has little say in how much teachers receive in benefits and wages. Obama needs to consider how his proposal will settle with powerful teacher unions and if additional time is in breach of their contracts.

Obama must also consider

participating in more social activities. If the child has a family, more time in school can also disrupt family bonding.

Aside from low test scores, Obama's proposal for additional time is in response to foreign countries school systems, many of which have their students spending more time overall in the classroom.

According to the Associated Press (A.P.), Taiwan, Japan, and China have their students spending 190 to 201 days in school, while American students only spend about 180. Asian students are also expect-

## Has morning risen on Californian dream?

By Madeleine Lambelet  
STAFF WRITER

For decades California has been a precedent-setting giant in America. Whether it's a political or social issue, you can bet California tackled it first.

It also used to be that anyone planning to explore the country would inevitably end up in California. They would be drawn to its sunny weather and unique population. Sadly, the flow of people appears to be slowing to a trickle.

With unemployment rates catastrophically high and a government unable to take control, California is drowning. A school system that used to be ranked amongst the highest in the country is now one of the worst.

California is also one of the top offending states in terms of carbon dioxide emissions. Its dry climate causes the state to spend money it lacks on electricity to meet its water needs. The state is effectively broke because the government spends too much money supporting special interest groups.

Proposition 13 was passed in 1987 and demanded a two-thirds majority for the legislature. This means that fixing a budget or raising taxes is essentially impossible, since a two-thirds majority is almost never attainable.

Despite the difficulties of working with Proposition 13, not everyone has given up hope. For those dedicated enough to either preserving what has made California so great, a state where the people's voice is truly heard in government, or changing the political system entirely, there are organizations to help.

California Forward is an organization focused on changing to the government to actually work for the people, not against them. Their mission statement calls for the improvement of the quality of life in California by creating a responsive government. They plan to do this through fact-based reforms that would engage diverse populations, assess problems in government and create solutions that would suit Californians, and create effective campaign tactics to ensure that the new techniques would work.

Another organization is Repair California, whose purpose is to rework the pre-existing government. They believe the only way to fix the system is to call for a limited constitutional convention. The purpose of this convention would be to rewrite an existing constitution, or to rework the laws of California.

Being on the opposite side of the country, it is easy for us North Carolinians to be nonchalant about California. In comparison to such a train wreck of a

state, North Carolina isn't so bad, right? Let's face it, most of us live in a wonderful Guilford bubble. But step outside of that bubble onto the streets of Greensboro and the sun does not shine so brightly.

It is difficult to believe North Carolina is much better off than California. Drive through downtown Greensboro and you are almost always going to see someone on a corner asking for money. We have more people in need than people willing to help. The unemployment rate for North Carolina is 10.8, barely lower than California's 12.2.

North Carolina and California are not alone. Every state has its issues to work on. Unstable economies, high unemployment rates, homeless shelters packed to the breaking point. California is not the only one stuck in the depths of debt.

The fact of the matter is that everything is cyclical. Americans love to be dramatic and declare the end of days whenever a problem presents itself. In reality, California will not burn in the fires of state-hell. If people continue to take an interest in the problems of the state, eventually change will happen. As long as there are people who refuse to give up on the dream that California once was, it will always be the destination for the wayward romantics.

### Staff Editorial

## Signing of Matthew Shepard Act important step nationally, locally

Eleven years after the brutal killing of Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming, Congress passed the Matthew Shepard Act on Oct. 22, and President Obama signed the bill into law on Oct. 28. The act expanded the 1969 federal hate crime law to protect crimes that are motivated by a person's gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

The Guilford community has been a strong advocate for gay rights since the 70's and continues to be a proactive part of a growing civil rights movement that has led to fundamental legislative changes. The issues at the forefront are gay marriage and extending hate crime legislation to crimes motivated by a person's sexual orientation.

Only a few weeks ago, on Oct. 12, the theater studies department presented The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later—a play about Shepard's death. Guilford was granted the special rights and privilege of participating in the nationwide presentation by the Tectonic Theatre Project because they were impressed by our community's response to the Bryan incident.

While the passage of the Matthew Shepard Act is a step forward, the fact is that of the 45 states that have hate crime statutes, 18 of them, including North Carolina, have not extended the law to crimes motivated by sexual orientation.

Guilford professors and students, including members of Pride have been playing an instrumental role in contacting NC legislators over the years to persuade them to support House Bill 207, which proposes extending hate crime legislation to crimes motivated by gender, sexual orientation, age and disability. While it has not gone up for a vote yet, passing the federal version of it might make passing it on a state level more probable.

This semester Guilford has proven yet again that as a community we are capable of responding to actions of hate in a proactive manner. The bias incident erupted anger and distress among the community; however, this anger was expressed in a largely positive manner.

Instead of reacting based on one's initial feelings, invested parties channeled their anger and hurt into a series of proactive events that were planned to educate and unite the campus. The week after the incident, Pride decided to co-sponsor the Guilford Peace Society's peace vigil. Among other things, Pride also held a safe-zone training workshop, and a film series on gay rights was also initiated on campus to educate the community and stir discussion.

While it is impossible to eliminate all acts of hate from our campus, our community has at least made it clear that such actions will not be tolerated. Moreover, as a community, we have demonstrated to ourselves and to others, that we have mastered the balance between acting and reacting — we are charged by passion of reaction but are guided by intentional and positive actions.