

Thom Tillis supports birth control only to gain support

"What I see from the folks who are opposing our agenda is whining coming from losers," said Thomas "Thom" Tillis in an interview at his Raleigh office regarding the political environment.



BY AMOL GARG
STAFF WRITER

Recently, several Republican Senate candidates all across the country have temporarily changed their policy regarding birth control. In an attempt to gain the favor of voting women due to their continued defeat at the hands of Democrats, Republicans have been more lenient in their opinions on birth control. The biggest case of this, which has been receiving wide national coverage, is Tillis, a North Carolina Senate candidate.

Throughout his political career, Tillis has taken it upon himself to restrict women's access to legal abortion. Tillis managed to garner another victory for the anti-abortion cause.

Slyly slipping an anti-abortion clause into a motorcycle bill, which nearly called for the shutdown of all North Carolina abortion clinics, Tillis has continually aimed at limiting women's rights.

So why has Senate candidate Tillis abruptly decided to break from his flourishing and enthusiastic track record of anti-abortion policies and openly embrace contraceptives?

In order to close the staggering gender gap of 33 percent with his opponent Democratic Senator Kay Hagan.

"This is simply a cynical political attempt to whitewash his terrible record and agenda for women's health," stated Vice President for Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood Action Fund Melissa Reed in a public statement released after a Tillis-Hagan debate. "If Thom Tillis and others were serious about expanding access to



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birth control they wouldn't be trying to repeal the no-copay birth control benefit or cut women off from Planned Parenthood's preventive health services."

Currently, Hagan is leading by six percent against Republican candidate Tillis with a 45 percent to 39 percent record according to a Rasmussen Reports poll. To entice voters, Tillis, along with several other Republicans, has engaged in politicking. Why else would a personhood amendment advocate, someone who supports the legal right of a fetus' life, accept over-the-counter birth control?

In order to gain votes, Tillis has temporarily taken up supporting birth control which, after the elections, will eventually result in his formerly conservative views of strict anti-abortion policies taking precedence. This can undoubtedly be seen in the fact that Tillis,

despite "supporting" contraceptives, has yet to discuss the future of birth control and his plans regarding it.

"Tillis must realize that running against such a moderate nominee threatens him, and in order to save his political career, he, in turn, concedes certain birth control rights and his personal values in order to gain popularity at the polls," said Early College senior and former Gay Straight Alliance president Kaelan McCone in an email interview with the Guilfordian.

By rallying behind the support for over-the-counter contraceptives, Tillis most likely aims to make the public forget his colorful track record regarding abortion.

"I think, once again, Speaker Tillis doesn't understand the needs of women," said Hagan at their debate on Sept. 3, 2014. "He supports the Hobby Lobby decision that does allow an employer

to deny access to birth control for their employees. I would certainly support over-the-counter contraception, but I want it to be part of the prescription drug plan if these individuals are working for a for-profit company. That's what Speaker Tillis would deny."

From championing an ultrasound bill that required women to be shown an ultrasound before an abortion to working to limit funding for Planned Parenthood, Tillis has continually strived to oppose abortion.

Tillis' sudden decision to support contraceptives is quite baffling. It does not constitute a true change of heart or represent progress on the conservative side towards more women's rights.

Instead Tillis, along with a handful of other Republicans, is just trying to even up the voter gender gap through false advocacy.

Letter to the editor: Students deserve the right to fly our flag in memory of 9/11

Recently I was subjected to disciplinary action due to my decision to fly the American flag on my college campus on Sept. 11.

Most of us are aware of the campus policy against flags, which stems from the practice of austerity and avoidance of symbols in Quaker meetinghouses. This is all well and good, but Guilford College is not a Quaker meetinghouse. It is an educational institution, one that receives federal money at that.

This brings me to this past Thursday.

Aware of the campus policy, I decided to hang an American flag off the balcony of the student center. I am the president of our College Republicans chapter and I felt it would be an effective way to remind people of the day and perhaps give them a moment of pause or reflection.

The flag was confiscated, and I went and retrieved it. After I regained possession of Old Glory, another student and I went back and put the flag back up, not leaving it this time. After a short while, a sympathetic Public Safety officer arrived and told me that I could either take the flag down or he would have to follow his orders to confiscate it and document me. I let him document me.

In addition, Guilford College in no way recognizes the day or had any sort of service or memorial. In fact, a student-run candlelight vigil was soiled when a professor, in an inconceivable display, delivered a harebrained, drunken diatribe about the "blood on American hands" in the years after 9/11. This is certainly a viewpoint one may hold, but it seems reasonable to expect a member of our school's faculty to demonstrate even an infantile amount of maturity and recognize that there is a time and place for everything.

In summary, I will now be subject to possible disciplinary action for having the audacity to fly our nation's flag while on American soil on one of the most important days of the national calendar. In addition, this policy seems to magically disappear whenever the international club holds an event. This leads me to believe that the rule has less to do with traditional Quaker values (which don't apply in this situation) and more to do with a rising sentiment that patriotism is something to be ashamed of, lest a vocal minority decides to take offense.

Harrison Houlihan, president of the Guilford College Republicans



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This Week's STAFF EDITORIAL

Rallying with students against sexual assault

In a country where 17.7 million women are victims of attempted or completed rape, it is important that as a college community, we address the issue of sexual assault through educating ourselves.

According to the American Association of University Women, "Sexual assault disproportionately affects college women and impedes their ability to participate fully in campus life. Educational equity for women and girls requires fair, responsive, fully developed campus sexual assault policies, knowledgeable administrators, and, ultimately, an end to sexual violence on campuses."

As a college community, every individual should be able to recognize and prevent sexual violence so that we feel prepared to address sexual violence when encountered.

Sexual violence prevention educators have found that when individuals are educated on sexuality and sexual health, they are more likely to make healthy sexual decisions, increase communication skills, develop respect for boundaries, and know what to do if they or someone they know has been assaulted.

Consequently, individuals who are educated on these issues are less likely to become perpetrators of sexual violence and more likely to address sexual violence if it is encountered, so it is important that our community encourage open conversation about sexuality and sexual violence.

The Consent Campaign was created for this purpose exactly: to provide an in-depth education on sexual health and sexuality.

Through informing our community of the benefits of healthy sexual relationships and the importance of consent, we can help put an end to sexual violence, and its crippling effects on victims.

While we do acknowledge that educating our community on sexual violence will not put an end to sexual violence completely, it will support the development of a safe community and the establishment of safe sexual relationships.

It is crucial that every member of our community learns the importance of consent, safe sexual relationships, and open conversations about sex and sexuality.

Thankfully, our college's Consent Campaign is here to facilitate these conversations and answer any questions that students may have. We encourage every member of our community to attend the events hosted by Consent Campaign sponsors to understand the importance of safe sexual activity.

As representatives of the student body, we at The Guilfordian will remain committed to reporting on the importance of consent and sexual education.

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