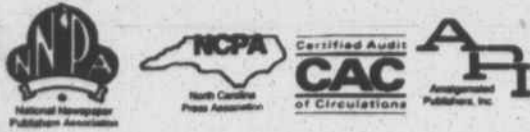


OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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A meaningless survey

The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research has published the results of its most recent survey on the effectiveness of our state lawmakers. But people should not consider this a meaningful assessment of how the men and women we send to Raleigh are actually performing on the job.

The biggest problem is that the survey is little more than a popularity contest among legislators and lobbyists. Apparently, most of the state's black legislators aren't held in very high esteem by their peers.

"I'm concerned about what people in my district think," said Rep. Alma Adams. "And they give their opinion on election day."

Adams is entirely correct. It is ridiculous to ask anyone other than the voting public to ascertain how effective any given law maker is. And there is real damage that can be done by disseminating such misrepresentation of reality.

"The Center's Rankings help citizens understand the way the legislature works," insists Ran Coble. Coble is the executive director for the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research.

According to the survey results, Larry Womble, Alma Adams and Flossie Boyd-McIntyre are the bottom of the barrel. If voters took this information seriously, they may not re-elect those with poor rankings. Perhaps that's why the survey has been around for 20 years.

One way to make certain a lawmaker is ineffective is to tarnish his or her reputation. That is precisely what this bogus survey does. It gives the impression that black lawmakers can't get anything accomplished. Nothing could be further from the truth. This survey also makes some legislators look better than they are.

Republican Steve Wood has had members of his own party get up and walk out of committee meetings because he is there. How effective can he possibly be? Well, if you believe the survey results, he's still more effective than Adams, Womble and Boyd-McIntyre. That's really hard to believe, and it is irresponsible to promote such an image.

A legislator's clout ought to be what he accomplishes for the people who elected him or her — not how well he is liked by political adversaries and lobbyists.

No boycott

From The Herald-Sun of Durham

We don't blame teachers for feeling besieged these days. With confidence in public education running low, people are looking over teachers' shoulders like never before. But boycotting the state's test for teachers in low-performing schools, as some educators are now threatening to do, only hurts their case.

The N.C. Association of Educators is even considering a lawsuit to stop the tests. Talk about bad public relations.

The teachers have our sympathy. But they should swallow their pride, take the competency test and move on. Acing it, as we expect most teachers will, would help silence the critics and restore faith in our schools. Kicking up a fuss, on the other hand, would only feed the public's distrust of the schools.



The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. To ensure the authenticity of the letter, you must include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to: Chronicle Mailbag, P.O. Box 1636, Winston-Salem, NC 27102. E-mail

Charities would benefit

Letters to the Editor:

The criticism of selfish, highly-paid baseball stars and greedy owners is a favorite battle cry around which the "Vote No crowd" rally.

They want us not to Vote YES on the May 5 baseball food and ticket tax. Here are some examples of what the greedy Minnesota TWINS organization and its selfish players are doing in the Twin Cities and the Upper Midwest:

#1 The Twins, in conjunction with WCCO radio and the Salvation Army, raised \$13,000 at their season opener for southern Minnesota storm relief.

#2 Terry Steinbach has agreed to donate \$1,000 for each double he hits this season to the St. Paul-based Deva House. They will set up a model children's hospice program. Steinbach hit 17 doubles in 1997.

#3 The Twins have given \$700,000 to local charities through the Twins Community Fund since 1991.

#4 The Twins will host 25 free youth baseball clinics for boys and girls in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and the Dakotas. Over 800,000 youngsters have participated in this program that a Twins' scout started in 1961.

#5 The Twins sponsor 18 inner city baseball teams through the Boys & Girls Clubs in 1998 in conjunction with the Major League Baseball initiative in many major league cities called "Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities" (RBI).

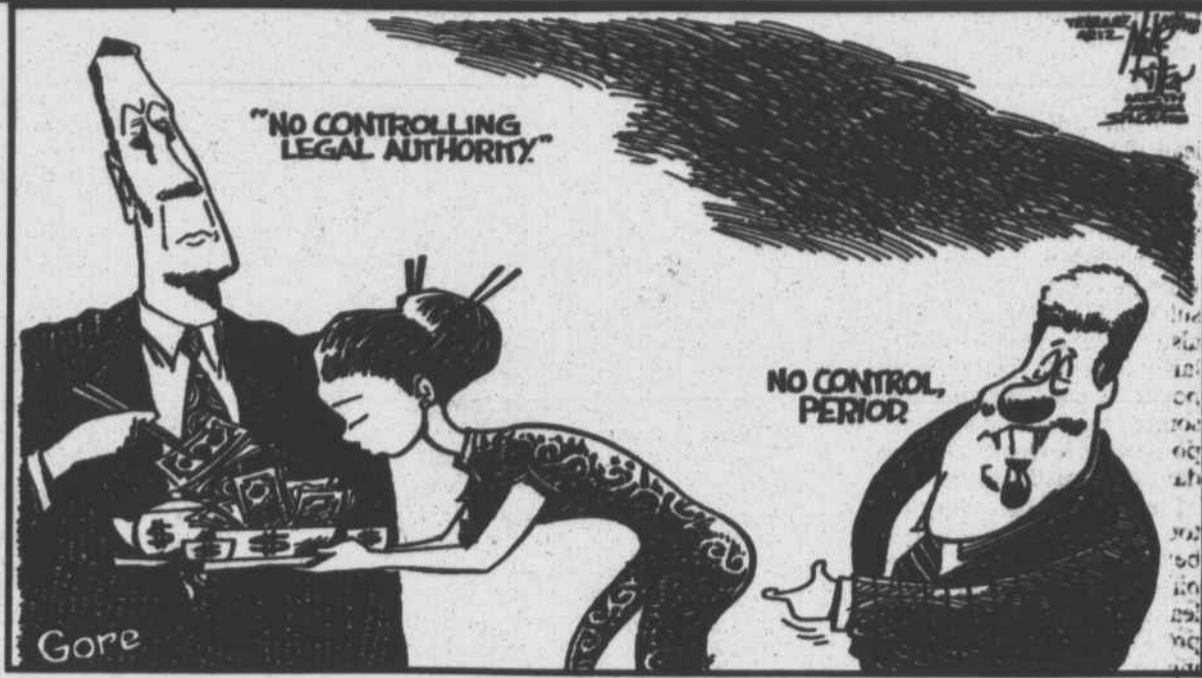
#6 200,000 students took part in the Twins' "Salute to Education" program in 1997.

#7 80,000 free tickets are provided to inner-city kids and senior citizens each year through the charitable efforts of Kirby Puckett and Paul Molitor.

#8 50,000 free tickets were donated to kids by the Twins organization in 1997.

#9 The Twins will initiate the Twins College Scholarships! Every student attending a game will receive an opportunity to enter and win one of 10 Twins Player Scholarships to the Twin Cities' 2-Year Colleges.

#10 Through the Twins Player Charity Program, every Twins designates a local non-profit organization as his designated charity. Thanks to this program Twins players have made a significant



impact on the lives of adults and kids living throughout the region. Some recent examples:

• Kirby Puckett has raised in excess of \$2 Million for Children's HeartLink since 1991.

• Kent Hrbek has raised in excess of \$700,000 for ALS patients and research since 1987.

• Paul Molitor has raised more than \$100,000 for Camp Heartland and Make-A-Wish in 1997.

• Rick Aguilera has raised more than \$50,000 for Athletes in Action since 1992.

#11 As the Upper Midwest was ravaged with the "500-Year Flood" of 1997, the Twins organization focused on helping families in need. Carl and Eloise Pohl and the Twins family contributed \$50,000 to the flood-relief efforts designed to help families recover from this natural disaster. In addition, the Twins sent groups of employees to the Red River Valley to aid in the cleanup. Throughout the season the club hosted flood victims and volunteers at the ballpark.

#12 The Twins January caravan composed of players, alumni and broadcasters visited more than 30 communities in the upper Midwest, attracting an estimated 20,000 fans.

#13 The Twins Wives Organization formed a partnership with the Minnesota Quilters Association in 1997 to raffle a series of autographed quilts with all proceeds benefiting the Ronald McDonald House of the Twin Cities. These player wives provided more than \$20,000 in Autograph Party proceeds to Deva House and the Gillette Children's Hospital.

Is this the kind of behavior we

can expect from greedy owners and the selfish highly paid players of Major League Baseball? Might this occur when Major League Baseball comes to the Triad. If so, many youth service agencies, schools and charities would benefit from these people... and that's a "hit" in any league.

Note: Jack Hutslar is a sports junkie and a somewhat biased Vote Yes volunteer who must Vote Yes on May 5. Web sites of interest to baseball and youth sport fans include: www.triadbasesball.com, www.minnesotatwins.com, www.majorleaguebaseball.com, www.sportingnews.com, www.fanlink.com, www.littleleague.com, www.sportingnews.com, www.fanlink.com, www.littleleague.com, www.pony.com, www.bgca.org, www.ymca.net, www.ywca.org, www.girlscouts.org, and www.NAYSI.com.

Jack Hutslar
Kernersville

A shell game?

To the Editor

Debating, arguing, posturing, adding personal spin and voting are the good American way and democracy at its zenith.

To be informed by an open, honest, objective, non-biased media - whether print, picture or voice - should be the hope of all free people.

Whether one votes for or

against the proposed stadium is each person's private decision. The problem seems to be that if this proposal is passed, the motoring public and the general fund taxpayer will see their funds and fees used in ways they will have no control over.

Fuel tax and road fees will be used for roads, streets, traffic control devices and personnel. General tax funds will be used for storm water collection, retention and treatment if required, potable water supply problems — landfill capacity for millions of food wrappers and beer cups — already a contentious subject between the two counties involved and so many other unasked questions and unclear answers.

Will a private access road and parking lot be included for the use of the holders and users of the sky boxes? When these companies and corporations and private people write off the expense of travel, food, drink and other entertainment in town, will the general fund taxpayer be asked to subsidize the lost taxes?

The November 1997 issue of Reader's Digest had a very informative and thought-provoking article titled "The Stadium Shell Game." The subtitle was "What happens when public money is used to help fund private playgrounds." Reprints were available.

A project of this magnitude will affect people for many decades to come; it won't go away or be abandoned even if it fails to pay its own way. The legacy we leave our grandchildren will reflect on us for a long time.

Doug Lee

Voices from the community...

Residents of East Winston were asked their views on the possibility of East Winston Library Branch closing down.



Kwame Nyerere

I find it ironic that decision makers find it necessary to ponder the idea of closing our little deprived library. Yet, they are spending money to acquire a larger building for the Reynolda Branch. While simultaneously naming another branch after one of our Black heroines.



Maria Antunez

We need our library, in our neighborhood. I don't even go downtown to study at that library.



Terquoiya Harrison

East Winston Library should not close. It is safe to walk to, we walk there in groups. That is how many of us get there.



Marquea Heath

If that library closes, a lot of kids will get into trouble on the streets. That is a safe place to hang out. Plus, I use it too much to lose it.



Jamall Scott

East Winston Library closing down is news to me. I hope they let people know before they close it for sure. I use it to do my school assignments.