

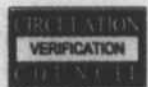
# OPINION/ FORUM

## THE CHRONICLE

Celebrating 37 Years of Community Journalism

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Publisher/Co-Founder  
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Rep. Earline Parmon joins Rep. Larry Womble at a 2009 press conference to celebrate the passage of the Racial Justice Act.

## We Like ...

The race for the 32nd District Senate seat is one of the most closely watched this election cycle. It pits Democrats State Rep. Earline Parmon, City Council Member James Taylor and political newcomer Wilbert Banks against one another. We admire Taylor's ambition and fresh ideas, but Parmon's grassroots and political experience make her a much more superior candidate.

Decades before she was ever elected to public office, she paid her dues in the community, working to better folks' lives and right wrongs. Her grassroots background is evident in her long, successful record in the House. She is not afraid to take on tough fights and call it like she sees it. Her style has not always won her fans, especially on the other side of political aisle, but it is effective, and a proven, effective leader is what the 32nd District needs.



Coleman

In the District 21 Court Judge race, we like **Richard D. Ramsey**. He has publicly voiced his support for the kind of creative sentencing that could keep young, non-violent offenders out of jail, and we think his more than three decades of work as a criminal defense attorney will make him a fair judge who is able to weigh the merits of both sides equally.



Etheridge

In the Democratic race for Governor, we like **Bob Etheridge**. As a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives and onetime State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Etheridge has the kind of background

needed to tackle the state's complex issues. Experience is also the reason we like **Linda Coleman** for lieutenant governor. Coleman is a former chair of the Wake County Board of Commissioners who went on to serve three terms in the State House. Gov. Bev Perdue was so impressed with her that the governor appointed her to head the Office of State Personnel. Coleman is sharp and savvy and would be an asset to this state.

For N.C. Commissioner of Labor, we think former Labor Commissioner **John C. Brooks** has the best chance of giving current Commissioner Cherie Berry a good fight. The cold shoulder Berry recently gave a group fighting for better living conditions for migrant workers is yet another sign that she needs to be shown the exit.

Yadkinville farmer **Walter Smith** has visited Winston-Salem several times in his bid to become the next N.C. Commissioner of Agriculture. He has shared good, positive ideas, and as a former small town mayor (of Boonville) and U.S. Department of Agriculture official, Smith can go toe-to-toe with Republican incumbent Steve Troxler, who is likely to breeze through the GOP Primary.

For State Treasurer, incumbent **Janet Cowell** deserves another go-round, as does U.S. Rep. **Mel Watt**, who has long served the 12th Congressional District well. We like School Board Member **Elisabeth Montsinger** in the Fifth Congressional District. She is a fighter who is not afraid to be bold. She has also shown a willingness to stand up for what is right and just.

Speaking of Election, the UNC-CH School of Law and Democracy North Carolina are advising voters to go [www.NCElectionConnection.com](http://www.NCElectionConnection.com) to preview their ballot before going to the polls.

"Millions of North Carolina voters have been placed in new General Assembly and Congressional districts and that can cause lots of heartburn and mass confusion at hundreds of split precincts across the state," the groups say.

Also, the groups have a toll-free hotline to answer questions about where to vote, who's on the ballot or to report any voting problems. The number is 1-866-OUR-VOTE (687-8683).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Passionate about the cause

The following letter was written by the student featured in last week's paper for wearing Middle Eastern clothing to test the local level of sensitivity.

To the Editor:

Once again, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to all of you for taking interest and consideration in this initiative. From having time and experiences in the Middle East, I have gained such an incredible respect and admiration for the Arabian communities, and in turn, advocacy and creating equality for Muslim and Arab peoples is a leading priority of mine. I would be remiss if I did not bring back these same experiences and learnings to share with my campus and broader community.

Your devotion for creating discussion and building community is appreciated by many.

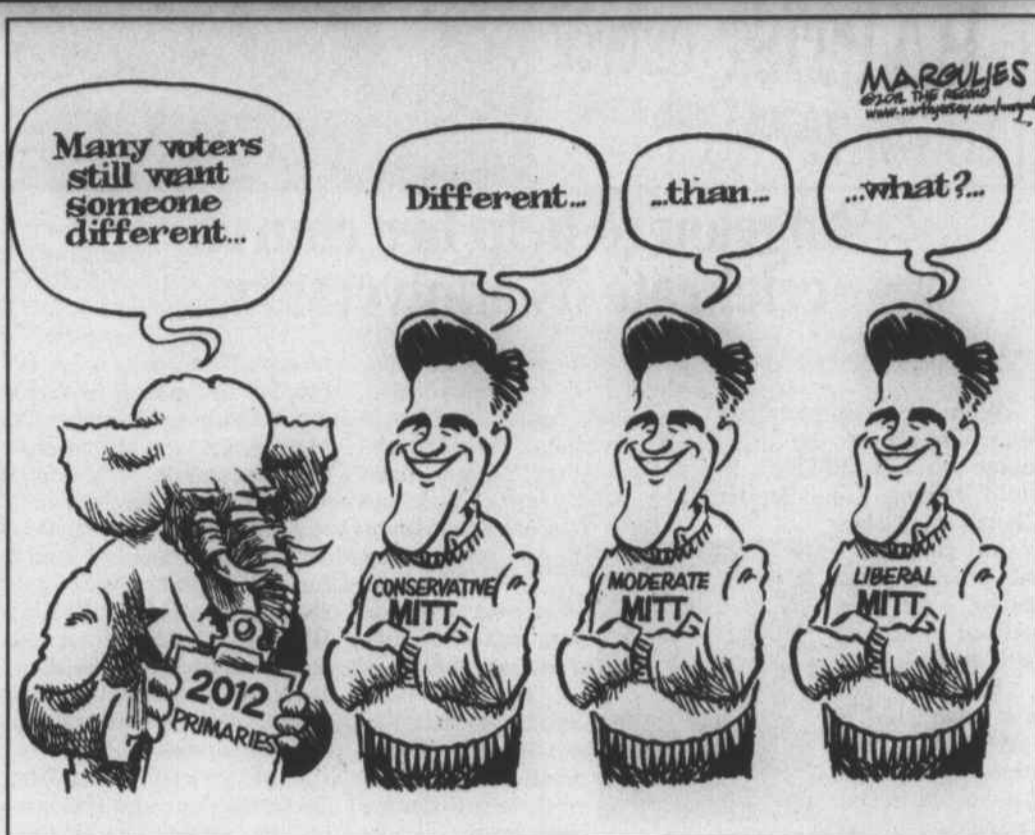
Best Regards,  
Demetrius L. Jones

### Wayne Patterson

To the Editor:

A man is the creator, protection, foundation and wisdom of the world. At this time it is an honor to give patronage to Attorney S. Wayne Patterson.

He is not a typical politician candidate. Throughout the years, he stood firm with his beliefs. Patterson addresses the situation by pulling the bull by the horns and is result oriented. He doesn't change his views just



to satisfy a group. Patterson is who he says he is. Patterson is a person that truly believes "TOGETHER WE CAN!"

Patterson helped BPAL (the Black Political Action League) form its 501c3 status, and as the president of NAACP, he has increased membership. He has created jobs at Rebecca Convenience Store in Northeast Winston-Salem, provided information to local businesses about funding and education and is Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.'s "Brother of the Year."

As we evaluate Patterson, understand that he had challenges along the way. He grew up in Cleveland Avenue Housing Projects and was homeless during his teen years.

He is a dedicated, devoted, loyal husband to a beautiful wife, Tamica, and is an

active father of four.

Valerie Benton

### Ed Hanes

To the Editor:

I am pleased to write a letter endorsing Ed Hanes for the 72nd District for NC House for the May 8 primary.

I have known Ed Hanes and his family for a number of years. Ed is a tough-minded, but a sensitive and compassionate human individual. He works extremely effectively with people of all walks of life - young and old, rich and poor, black and white - because he works very hard and skillfully. He is a good listener, but he can take information and translate it into decisions.

I believe he will be a

skilled House member because he works very closely and carefully with people and agencies in the community. He has a superb sense of Forsyth County and the State of North Carolina, including its problems and possibilities. I can recommend you to vote for Ed without reservations. He is intelligent, hard-working, conscientious and dedicated to excellence in education.

Ed is able to mold consensus among many political and educational points of view. He has also been involved with college teaching for a number of years.

I will be happy to respond to any concerns you may have concerning Ed Hanes' background and educational experiences.

Beaufort Bailey  
336-922-5423

## Students with loans deserve corporate treatment

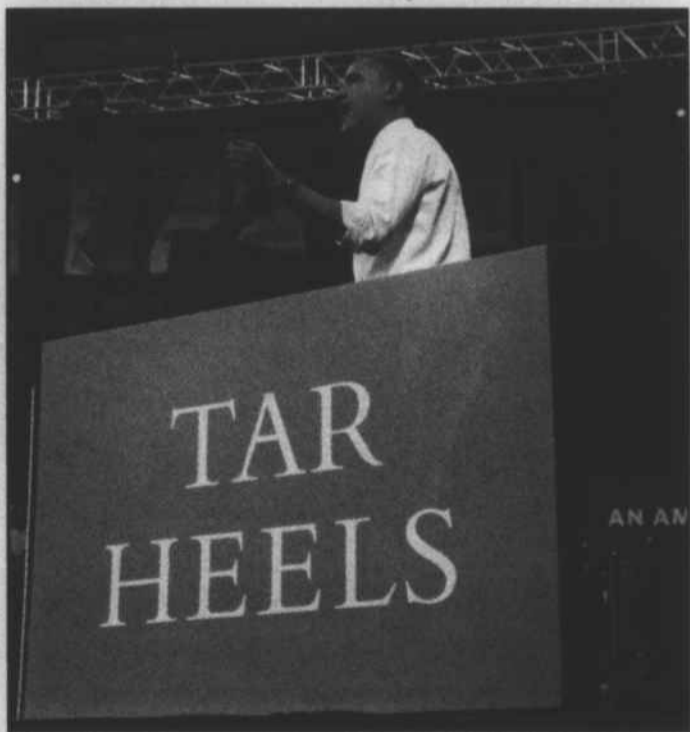


Julianne Malveaux  
Guest Columnist

President Barack Obama hit a home run when he traveled to three colleges last week: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the University of Iowa. Though Republicans called it a campaign trip to swing states, the fact is that, at the cusp of graduation season, President Obama did the right thing to share his feelings on legislation that would either increase the interest rate on subsidized Stafford student loans or take money from essential women's health programs to maintain the 3.4 percent interest rate.

In rallying students, President Obama is reminding them that their fate is in his hands. An increase in the Stafford loan program would affect 7.4 million students. Cutting \$5.6 billion from women's health programs would affect millions of women. Pitting women's health against lower student loan rates makes no sense. We could make headway if we treated students the same way we treat corporations.

In the wake of the bank bailout, banks qualified for low-interest and even no-interest loans. Students have always had to pay their share, and in this economy, a 3.4 percent interest rate can hardly be considered low interest. Now, if nothing is done, the rate can rise to 6.8 percent, and 7.4 million students will be affected. This



President Barack Obama speaks at UNC Chapel Hill on April 24.

is hardly compatible with President Obama's pledge to make our nation, once again, a leader in the educational arena.

Higher interest rates for student loans are a step backwards, often discouraging students from attending or continuing college, or extending the time it takes for them to finish degrees. This is especially true for African American, working class, and first-generation students.

The average college graduate leaves school with \$25,000 of student loan debt, the average African American student with even more. The time it takes to complete college has inched up, partly because students drop out a semester or two to gather funds and partly because some colleges have been forced to cut faculty so much that essential courses are not offered frequently

enough. Students are shouldering a bigger burden on their student loans, and colleges are also burdened when state legislatures apply drastic cuts to higher education budgets. Many states are also hampered because they, unlike the federal government, can't carry deficits from year to year.

It's no secret that if we invest in higher education now, we'll have a stronger workforce later. As it is, heavy student debt prevents young people from fully participating both in the labor force and life. Many take jobs because they can make great money, eschewing jobs in social work or teaching because they don't pay enough.

Many others living with Mom and Dad delay marriage and homeownership while they tackle debt. While these students took on debt knowing they'd have to pay

it back, what kind of country makes upward mobility so unaffordable that students literally shackle themselves to debt so that they can have a shot at participating in our changing labor force?

Why can't we treat students the same way that we treat corporations, offering them subsidized interest rates, or even zero interest rates? After all, they are helping us meet national goals and are key to our national and international survival. But banks are a bigger and more effective lobby than students, and we don't mind subsidizing banks, while students are another story.

The human costs are high. The shattered dreams are heart breaking. I've seen Mom and Dad borrow on their home so baby girl can go to college, only to find the amount they have is simply not enough. I've seen folks turned away from student loan opportunities because their credit is bad, forcing them into higher loan options. I've seen students opt to work more hours, affecting their grades but paying their bills. Some students choose off-campus housing because they think it is cheaper, only to find themselves hungry and stuck with costly bus rides. Again grades suffer.

We have a generation shackled by debt, and legislators who have only come up with the option of throwing women's health care under the bus to lower rates. We say we believe young people are our future. We have a funny way of showing it.

Julianne Malveaux is an economist and author and president of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro.