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BOARD EDITORIALS

Vote for the Bond

The \$3.1 billion higher education bond is needed to bring UNC-system schools and community colleges into the 21st century.

On Nov. 7, as residents of North Carolina select the next batch of elected officials, their most enduring decision might not involve the names Gore, Bush, Vinroot or Easley, but could instead be their choice as to whether to support a \$3.1 billion bond for the UNC system.

Simply put, the issue before the state's voters is whether it is worth doubling the state's debt to greatly improve our public universities and community colleges.

In the view of The Daily Tar Heel, it is, because the bond addresses the urgent need to expand and update embarrassingly outdated facilities on every public campus of higher learning statewide.

But the bond has a few potential drawbacks. Most notably is that bonds are borrowed money. North Carolina enjoys a strong reputation on Wall Street for paying its debts. But the size of this bond package could jeopardize that, especially considering the perennially tight state budget. That could mean higher taxes, as state leaders rightly would rather make the politically unpopular move than lose our sound financial reputation. Anyone supporting the bond should be aware of this possibility.

And this bond must not become a precedent for UNC-system funding. The "independent overseers" of the money should make sure there are frequent audits to curb wasteful spending, preventing another bond proposal a few years from now.

The bond, if passed, will provide \$2.5 billion to the 16 campuses of the UNC system and \$600 million to the 59 N.C. community colleges. This money is especially crucial now, as the two already overcrowded systems are expecting an enrollment increase of 100,000 students during the next decade. At a time when public universities are bracing for possibly having to turn away qualified applicants because of a lack of space, the bond will allow state schools to serve all interested students.

Another positive for the bond is the fact that the schools will be given the funds in one lump sum to spend as they see fit. Because all the money is coming in at once, large projects such as a new undergraduate science laboratory at UNC would come to fruition, setting the stage for a future influx of research money.

The last, but certainly not least, reason for voting for the bond is that it will provide the funding that the state's historically black colleges desperately need. Decades of ignoring these institutions have taken a toll on their campuses, and the bond money will help bring their facilities into the 21st century.

Although the bond isn't as perfect as many in the UNC-system community make it out to be, it is for the most part a sound solution to many glaring problems at our state's schools. Go out and vote "yes" for the bond on Tuesday and then demand that the powers-that-be keep their promises on how the money will be spent and supervised.

KELLI BOUTIN — EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Time Off

The Durham County jail's policy of giving offenders credit for time spent waiting is a miscarriage of justice.

Americans are taught from an early age to trust in the fairness of their justice system. In other words, most of us assume that once convicted, the "bad guy" gets locked away.

Usually that's true — unless you happen to have been convicted in Durham County. Our neighbor to the east apparently considers showing up to be equivalent to actually serving out a sentence.

Alan B. McKoy, who was sentenced to 30 days in the Durham County jail for choking and beating his girlfriend, told The News & Observer that he came to the jail for 12 straight days to turn himself in and was turned away each time because jailers did not have the proper paperwork to lock him up.

As if it wasn't bad enough that a convicted abuser was out on the streets for those 12 days, once he was taken into custody, he was given credit for serving every day that he had shown up at the jail.

Jailers justified the decision by saying that it is common for paperwork to be missing. Often, the problem occurs when probation officers fail to turn in the documents that give the jail the legal right to hold an inmate, said

Lt. Col. George Naylor, who runs the Durham jail.

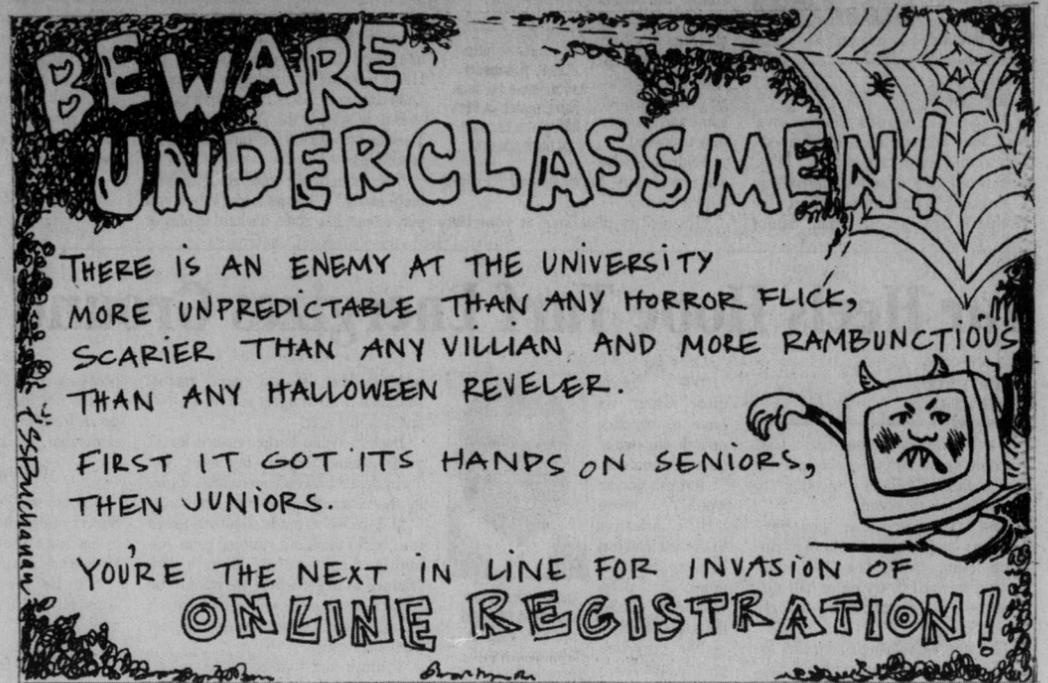
Jail policy permits offenders to get credit for the time they waited to get in the jail.

Jailers say this problem of missing paperwork has been going on since the 1980s and the policy usually has been applied to people who have been convicted of misdemeanors.

Regardless of whether most of the people who have benefited from the policy are misdemeanants or felons, it is absolutely ridiculous. Hangin' at home is not the same as serving a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week sentence behind bars, and it should not be treated as such.

While it certainly is not the offenders' fault that the paperwork was not filed correctly, the fact remains that they are criminals and therefore deserve no breaks. What they do deserve is to stay in jail for the full duration of the sentence that was deemed appropriate in a court of law.

Counting time spent out on the streets as time spent in jail is equivalent to commuting a prisoner's sentence, and it is a gross miscarriage of justice.



Presidential Candidates Revealed

Another Happy Halloween has come to an end. I can only hope that you ate enough candy to make yourself sick and that you sported something wild, outrageous or skimpy. But for two people, Halloween isn't over yet because they'll still be pretending next Tuesday to be someone they're not.

So now that you're all going to vote, I feel it's my civic duty to help you plow through the mud of the presidential candidates on this historic occasion.

The "choices" at the beginning of this year were a lot of interesting people who didn't have enough money or famous relatives even to be considered (because God forbid we should have a president who wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth). With the choices now, it's like choosing between a fraternity brother and a brown-noser.

Before I go on about this year's election, I think it's important to look at the gentlemen who carried this nation through its 200-plus years of democracy to help determine what type of leader we need for the present. Thomas Jefferson reminds us of the prominence of hypocrisy. The man who said "all men are created equal" was a slave owner. It's too bad we can't go back in time. Maybe we could have taught Jefferson more about the meaning of equality, and who knows what politically incorrect conversation could've taken place between Sally Hemmings and Monica Lewinsky.

Moving on, we have good ol' Andrew Jackson, who spent his life fighting "those people" off "his" land. Surely the new Sacajawea dollar coin now in circulation will rectify Jackson's tragic actions, which led to the Trail of Tears.

Nixon got a big fat tap on the hand for tapping phones. But William Jefferson Clinton is the Mack Daddy of them all. Smiling and playing his saxophone into the White House, he told us, "If I could've inhaled, I would have."

Let's face it, we're one of the most desensitized nations in the world, and the Clinton scandal provided the news media with something to write about that people would actually read. It also provided drama better than "The Young and the Restless" with its stained dresses, recorded conversations and old fogies trying to oust our valiant love machine, Bill Clinton.



ANNE MARIE TEAGUE
GLAMOROUS TRASH

From these men, we've learned to be sly, lie if we have to, have sex with anyone but our spouse and infiltrate others' secret information. Because the next president will have to be something like a morph of a cartoon superhero and a VH1 fashion model, I'm just happy that the "contestants" are more preoccupied powdering their noses rather than repeating the political follies and tragedies of the past.

The October issue of Cosmopolitan asked 1,000 women who was more of a babe in college: Al Gore or George W. Bush. Bush won with 79.4 percent. Naturally, these are the crucial statistics, because Hollywood glamour is omnipotent.

Gore says he's for the environment. The important question to ask is "which one," because his family owns some \$500,000 worth of stock in an oil company planning to drill on Colombian soil, the third most biodiverse region in the world. My bet is that Gore dressed up as a hippo for Halloween, uh, I mean "hippo-crit."

George W. Bush, who should've dressed up as the Joker, isn't much better with his intellectually empty glances and plans to plow up

Alaska. (You know, it wouldn't be prudent to destroy the Earth.) But of course the only thing that really matters is maintaining prices on the 54 percent of our oil we import, even if it's at the stake of our national security.

But why make your choice based on insignificant things like character? (Sarcasm.) I'm making my choice on more random factors like how many times a candidate can use the word "Medicare" or which candidate can slur his opponent with the most humorous punch-line. (Sarcasm again.)

Before I wrap this up, I couldn't possibly go without giving a "subliminal" (Ralph Nader) message myself. We all know Nader isn't going to win, so why does this man evoke such controversy? Are they afraid he might say something important? He's on the ballot in 44 states. Because we live in Hee-Haw-ville, we aren't one of them.

I recently read an article stating that if Nader got 5 percent of the vote, the Green Party would get federal funding. Therefore, a vote for Nader is not a throwaway vote or an indirect vote for Bush. Only when people vote for the "loser" can the "loser" one day ever become a participant.

The truth is, I've almost decided who I'm voting for. Hmm ... will I choose the person who invented the Internet and put it in a lock box or the man who is rumored to have enjoyed fine powder on a mirror and wears cowboy boots?

The only reason I can see to choose the cowboy boots is that I hope to be in the top 1 percent of the wealthiest people in America, and I definitely want tax relief.

Who would you choose? The bottom line is you should choose the candidate for president whom "Saturday Night Live" makes fun of the best, because isn't having a sense of humor all that really matters? (Sarcasm yet again.)

Anne Marie Teague is a senior business administration major from Lumberton. Reach her at teague@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

DTH Readers Speak Out About Third-Party Candidates' Views and How Voting for Them Will Affect the Future of National Politics

TO THE EDITOR:

While not as enthusiastic about Al Gore as Matt Jones, I too believe that progressive voters in North Carolina should vote to "Beat Bush," which of course implies vote Gore.

Although Nader has a seemingly more progressive stance on some of the issues (definitely not all), it would not be progressive (nor strategic) to vote for him. The word progressive inherently reaches for "progress." A vote for Nader will not bring progress. To the contrary, a vote for Nader will bring G. "Dub-yah" Bush, who will naturally "regress" national policy. But I won't ramble on about why we should fear Bush, although I think it marginalizes a lot of good working class people to base this fear solely in democratic propaganda. I will address two main points.

1. Nader is not the Great White Hope that the Green Party depicts him to be.

His positions within many crucial areas of gender, sexuality, domestic labor and the issues of people of color lack the progressive interpretation that he applies to the corporate world and the environment. This brings to question why progressives should vote for Nader even if he did stand a chance of winning.

To vote for him based on his progressive

stance on two basic issues is very dangerous. In fact, voting for anyone based on single issues is quite self-absorbed. It plays the game of "Oppression Olympics," placing one or two issues as priority above all others. The fact that Nader is good on the environment but bad on hate crimes does not make him any more progressive than the other candidates. It just makes him good on the environment.

2. As a progressive, I've found myself in the uncomfortable position of defending Al Gore, clearly not a favorite.

But when it is guaranteed that either he or Bush will be elected, it doesn't take Democratic National Committee propaganda to know it'd be easier to work with Gore. Though the candidates might seem to be the same to upper-middle-class white students, others have legitimate grounds for fearing Bush.

As a progressive, I am convinced and newly motivated to democratize our country's electoral and overall decision-making processes. There are strategic ways to go about doing this. Voting for Nader simply isn't one of them. Aside from making a statement (we can debate exactly what that statement is), a vote for Nader will not do anything concrete in promoting this societal change. Such statements lead one to

question exactly what Nader and the Green Party have done outside of election years to "progress" toward a more democratic electoral system.

The Green Party has made its statement, and it has legitimately shown how corrupt our electoral system is. However, at this point the party is only acting to divide progressives. They have even gone so far as to endorse Bush over Gore if it came down to it! This is not progressive. There are, however, coalitions establishing themselves to prepare for this struggle of democratizing the system regardless of who is elected, the Green Party being merely one of the third parties represented. Progressives should focus on this as a national agenda after the election; after voting for Al Gore.

Erica Smiley
Junior
Math and Political Science

The length rule was waived.

TO THE EDITOR:

If students are wondering whether they should vote for Al Gore or Ralph Nader, they need to realize that in North Carolina, you cannot vote for Ralph Nader in this election. He is not on the ballot and is not

a qualified write-in candidate. Votes for Nader will not be counted this election season.

If you choose to vote for a third-party candidate, you should not worry about what it will do to the general election. Yes, in many states voting for Nader might help Bush (a fact the GOP obviously agrees with because they are running pro-Nader ads in many close states), but that should not necessarily factor into your decision. If you are voting for Nader (or any other third-party candidate), do so for the right reasons, because you want to. Know that it might hand the election to someone else, but if you are indifferent as to the main candidates and don't care who wins, go ahead and vote for the third-party candidate of your choice and send a message to the main parties.

If votes for Nader do shift the election to Bush, that might not be a bad thing. If you believe that the Democratic Party has abandoned its liberal base, maybe losing an election will be just the thing to send them a message. If you hold your nose and vote for the main party, rather than the third-party your heart desires, you are doing nothing to reform the system or let your traditional party know how you truly feel.

If you support one of the main candi-

dates, vote for them. If you support a third party, vote for it — the main parties need to see that not everyone is happy with the way they operate.

Just remember, in North Carolina, a vote for Nader is not going to count either way.

Daniel Meier
Graduate Student
Law

Sway the Vote

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes letters of endorsement for national, state and local candidates.

Endorsement letters must adhere to the regular guidelines for submission. Publication is not guaranteed.

If you feel that you simply cannot say your piece in 300 words or less, however, consider writing a guest column for publication on Monday's Viewpoints page. Guest columns must be less than 850 words in length and written by no more than two people.

Please send your elections columns to editdesk@unc.edu or bring them by the DTH office before 6 p.m. today.

Need more information? Call Editorial Page Editor Kelli Boutin at 962-0245.



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail forum to: editdesk@unc.edu.