

Board Editorials

# Vote Lee for Senate ...

Sen. Howard Lee is the candidate best positioned to address the numerous hurdles facing the University community in the coming years.

Orange and Chatham counties need a senator who can implement his ideas, a senator capable of not just voicing our community's concerns but also doing something to solve the problems. UNC needs an influential senator to protect its funding from the budget writers' axe.

The Daily Tar Heel enthusiastically endorses Sen. Howard Lee, D-Orange, for the Senate District 23 Democratic primary as the candidate best suited for meeting the community's current and future needs.

Lee is an influential political figure with experience on both community and state levels. He has served six terms in the state legislature and was the first black mayor of Chapel Hill, serving from 1969-75.

Lee is a co-chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee and vice chairman of Committee on Education/Higher Education - two positions that directly shape the University's future.

While UNC was being threatened with severe budget cuts, Lee played a large role in shielding funding and holding the cuts to less than 3 percent, first in his capacity in the Senate and then as a co-chairman in the Joint Conference Committee charged with ironing out the differences between the budgets passed by the House and Senate.

Lee is rated the seventh most effective state senator by the non-partisan N.C. Center for Public Policy Research based on evaluations from fellow legislators, the capitol press corps and lobbyists.

Aside from his lengthy résumé, Lee has the eloquence necessary to fight for the community's needs on the Senate floor and the influence to win the support of his fellow legislators in committee meetings.

In a Thursday interview, Lee said he takes pride in his ability to compromise when needed to pass important legislation and to set a firm line at other times to protect University and local interests.

He said he also has developed friendships with both Republicans and members of the House - partnerships vital given the partisan spirit blocking legislation for the past year and the communication problems between the House and the Senate.

Lee also is in position to mold the future of the Triangle and the state through his dual roles as vice chairman of the Commerce and Transportation committees and as a Smart Growth proponent.

The state is facing severe economic problems brought about by a decline in the traditional economic fields of textiles and tobacco. Lee has a mixed approach of finding niche markets for struggling textile companies such as producing fabric for automobiles and using University research to jump-start new businesses. Lee also takes care of the future through his plans to hold a Visionary Economic Summit to discuss where the state should go in the coming decades, regardless of the primary's outcome.

Based on his influence and feasible plans, Lee is the best candidate.



Sen. Howard Lee

## ... Not Kinnaird

Sens. Howard Lee and Ellie Kinnaird, both D-Orange, are experienced legislators who have served the community faithfully throughout their terms.

Realizing that many residents and students would have a difficult time choosing between the two candidates, The Daily Tar Heel decided to break with tradition and endorse a primary candidate. Both Lee and Kinnaird were questioned about the University community, the state's economic woes and their visions for the future.

Kinnaird has several interesting ideas but does not have the legislative clout to implement them.

Kinnaird, serving her third Senate term, is not as well-positioned as Lee to shape the University budget or to advocate for the interests of Orange and Chatham counties. Compared to Lee's myriad leadership positions on Senate committees, Kinnaird's positions as chairwoman of Children and Human Resources and vice chairwoman of Pensions & Retirement and Aging fall woefully short.

Additionally, Kinnaird lacks influence in the legislature and in her own party.

Earlier this year, she proposed implementing taxes on soda, beer and tobacco. When her plan failed to pass a Senate dominated by fellow Democrats, Kinnaird then voted against the entire budget - the only Democrat to do so.

Her political courage is commendable, but Kinnaird demonstrated in the vote that she is more attached to lofty principles than concrete action. Admittedly, the Senate budget did harm several government agencies. But the budget also protected the UNC system and management flexibility from the worst threats of budget cuts.

It's often said that politics is the art of compromise. Kinnaird's hesitancy to practice that art weakens her voice and ability to represent the residents of Orange and Chatham counties.

There's no point in having a senator filled with idealistic promises that she ultimately cannot deliver.

## Speaking Your Piece

Regardless of their political beliefs, University students, faculty and staff should exercise their right to determine the state's elected leaders and influence the future.

You might think today's primary elections are unimportant. They might even seem irrelevant.

Actually, there has never been a better time to influence how our campus and community are run. The contentious year in the N.C. House and Senate shows how government impacts students.

The latest version of the UNC-system budget, completed informally Monday, comes two months late and with funding reductions of 2.39 percent. Even this small amount will have a massive impact on day-to-day life at UNC-Chapel Hill by resulting in more crowded classes and fewer sections.

Besides, the decisions elected officials take directly affect what is taught. Look at the provision sandwiched into the House version of the budget that denies state funding for a summer reading program

about religion unless it teaches "all known religions."

Legislators are also planning to implement a lottery referendum by shoe-horning in an amendment to the budget rendering obsolete all that debate over whether there should be a public referendum.

Past tuition debacles and a lack of student protests have left many legislators believing that students are apathetic.

If this year's voter turnout records show a marked student increase, how can legislators possibly claim that we do not care for the welfare of this University?

There's no better possible way to show your commitment to issues that affect you than to get out and vote.

Apathetic people don't vote. Activists do.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, which were reached after open debate. The board consists of eight board members, the assistant editorial page editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2002-03 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

## READERS' FORUM

Editor's Note: For more endorsement letters, visit <http://www.dailytarheel.com>.

### Kinnaird Only Senator Willing to Fight for Workers' Interests

TO THE EDITOR:

More than half of all Americans have no pension plan except Social Security. U.S. wage-earners collectively have less health coverage and less maternity leave and get the shortest average termination notice of all workers in the Western world.

From 1980-99, the 500 largest U.S. corporations tripled their assets and their profits and enlarged their market value eight-fold as measured by inflated stock prices. During that same period, those corporations eliminated 5 million American jobs, many in North Carolina. Do you really believe those corporations will create more jobs? If you do, I've got a bridge to sell you.

Although corporations rate tax credits very low on the list of reasons for relocating to a state, many of our legislators still want to offer them. And who do you think will pay for those fruitless breaks? Not the corporations. In fact, corporate tax loopholes in the next two years will cost more than companies will pay in income taxes. So, don't tell me there is no corporate welfare!

And the only person I see in the N.C. Senate who really works for workers is Sen. Ellie Kinnaird. She fights for us even when she has to stand alone to face the corporate schmoozers and users.

If you really want honesty and integrity and fairness in government, then repeat after me: Kinnaird can and Kinnaird will!

By the way, Howard Lee could but the fact is, he hasn't, and probably won't help those who earn less than \$100,000 a year. He might have been effective ... but only for the wealthy. Figures taken from Wealth and Democracy by Kevin Phillips.

Tana Hartman  
Administrative Director for Psychiatric Education

### Former Mayor Waldorf Urges Voters to Return Lee to the State Senate

TO THE EDITOR:

I write in support of Sen. Howard Lee's re-election as our district's state senator. We have been friends with Howard and Lillian Lee for a long time, but this election is too important to be decided on the basis of friendship alone.

We support Howard for many reasons. Though many legislators have voted for

improvements in the public schools - higher teacher salaries, lower class sizes - Howard Lee is the Senate leader in the fight for public schools.

In the area of public transportation, Howard began his distinguished advocacy as mayor of Chapel Hill, when he founded the state's first city-run bus system in the 1970s. He pushed through the General Assembly the first dedicated source of funding for the Triangle Transit Authority in 1991. And last year, his leadership was key in the reallocation of \$120 million in Highway Trust Fund money to public transportation systems.

Howard Lee's effectiveness on behalf of the University has been exceptional. His leadership as co-chairman of appropriations has enabled him to target state resources to the UNC Health System to improve access to health care for North Carolinians, including residents of Orange and Chatham counties.

The people of our district will lose an accessible and effective representative if Howard is not re-elected to the Senate. We will feel that difference in large and small ways. Please join Gary and me in voting for Howard Lee for state Senate on Sept. 10.

Rosemary Waldorf  
Chapel Hill

### Kinnaird Is a Candidate Who Practices Topics She Preaches About

TO THE EDITOR:

Ellie Kinnaird is the best candidate for N.C. Senate District 23. She has been a senator for six years. At times in the face of powerful opposition, she has bravely stood for the interests of her constituents. As a former mayor of Carrboro, she understands the importance of parking and transit to our local communities, particularly to UNC students and employees. She understands the many other factors surrounding issues of local growth and development and has a demonstrated ability to balance the sometimes competing interests of town and gown.

She has a solid record on education, the environment and health care. The senator stands firmly for working families and small business owners. Perhaps most of all, she not only supports campaign finance reform, she practices it. She limits contributions from individuals to \$150 and from PACs to \$250 - a clear difference with her opponent. For details see "Campaign Finance" at <http://www.seanc25.org>. Please support Ellie Kinnaird for re-election to the N.C. Senate.

Steve Hutton  
Epidemiology Programmer

### Lee Best Answer for Solving State's Slate of Widespread Problems

TO THE EDITOR:

A point deserving a lot of careful thought in the current N.C. Senate campaign is the performance difference between Sens. Howard Lee and Ellie Kinnaird. Lee uses his extensive experience in government, his political savvy and his negotiating skill to enact legislation of clear benefit. Sen. Lee has gone to the mat and come up victorious for public education, growth management, UNC and other issues. His accomplishments have positioned him for future success.

Ellie Kinnaird is a bright, personable individual, and it's understandable that she has many friends. But North Carolina, including Orange and Chatham counties, is in a terrible state of crisis: financial, unemployment and legislative. Admirable personal qualities notwithstanding, we just can't afford the luxury of electing a senator who'll respond to those crises with little more than rhetoric.

We need capability, leadership and dedication to getting the job done in the General Assembly. We need Howard Lee.

James W. Lea  
Professor  
Department of Family Medicine



# UNC's Response to Terrorism Only Increases Gap With N.C.

Rebuilding relations between UNC and the rest of North Carolina was one of the main highlights of Chancellor James Moeser's State of the University Address on Wednesday.

And for once, I couldn't agree with him more.

It is of utmost importance that all North Carolinians feel a sense of ownership in UNC.

After all, this is the university of the people, and the people should be proud of the institution their tax dollars go to support.

Most state residents beam with pride at the mere mention of the word "Tar Heels" yet cringe when people start talking about the politics of Chapel Hill.

I think N.C. Republican Party Chairman and former UNC Director of Athletics Bill Cobey best summed up these ambivalent feelings when he said, "People across the state love Chapel Hill, but they hate the politics that come out of there."

I suppose by now people expect a certain amount of left-wing rhetoric from this place given its long activist history.

But the divide between UNC and the rest of the state became crystal clear following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks last year when several University faculty members sponsored a series of teach-ins that, among other things, explored the ways the United States might have "pro-

voled" the terrorist attacks.

When news of the "teach-ins" hit the headlines and the University caught heat from alumni and concerned citizens

around the state and nation who were appalled at the practice, administrators, in usual fashion, dismissed the criticism as a call for censorship.

Now don't get me wrong. I certainly understand the need for and support free speech in our country, especially at our nation's institutions of higher learning, regardless of how left-wing, crazy or just plain idiotic the views expressed might be.

Generally these three descriptives are synonymous.

However, I am also a believer that there is an appropriate time and place for everything, and in the days following the Sept. 11 attacks the so-called "alternative" views expressed in the "teach-ins" were unnecessary and utterly disrespectful to the thousands of people who lost their lives that day.

One can only hope that things will remain more mainstream and respectful during the Sept. 11 memorial ceremonies scheduled for Wednesday.

It is the least the University can do to ameliorate the outrage many felt after learning of some of the campus events that followed Sept. 11 last year and would be a great place to begin the process of

rebuilding the bridge between UNC and the rest of the state.

But I'm not holding my breath. Catherine Lutz, one of the professors who participated in last year's "teach-ins," reiterated some of the same anti-military, anti-Bush and anti-America rhetoric in an op-ed piece in Monday's Daily Tar Heel that would make Osama bin Laden proud.

I have no doubt that there will be more "teach-ins" in the coming days to "educate" students on the "evil" nation that is America.

And when state taxpayers criticize them, University administrators will rush to defend these educational endeavors while labeling detractors as "unenlightened" and/or "close-minded."

It is fine and necessary for the University to present students with alternative views and even to challenge traditional ones.

However, University administrators should be sure that they are respectful of the more traditional beliefs that are held by the majority of state residents who pay their salaries.

If UNC officials want to begin the process of building ties with North Carolinians, I'd say Wednesday is a great time to start.

Michael McKnight is a junior journalism and public policy major. Reach him at [mmcknight@email.unc.edu](mailto:mmcknight@email.unc.edu).

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments. 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 [editdesk@unc.edu](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).