

BOARD EDITORIALS

# MAKE NO EXCEPTION

A new Department of Homeland Security requirement places unfair restrictions on foreign visitors coming from certain parts of the world.

Almost anyone who's traveled abroad in the two years since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks knows that going through U.S. customs can be an aggravating, time-consuming experience.

Now, in what seems to be an unfair requirement, many foreign visitors have to jump through one more hoop.

Early last week 115 airports and 14 seaports across the United States began photographing and fingerprinting incoming foreign visitors with nonimmigrant visas as part of the Department of Homeland Security's US-VISIT program.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said the program is the first in a series of steps to keep our borders open, but our country more secure.

He added, in comments made to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, that the new system will be "easy for travelers to use but hard for terrorists to avoid."

The system will be easier for some more than others, as travelers from 27 nations, mostly West European and a handful of Asian nations, are exempt from the procedure. The exemptions are questionable at best.

Officials for U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the exempted countries already have in place strong screening and security procedures.

But US-VISIT already has faced a significant amount of international criticism.

A Brazilian judge has ordered Brazilian customs officials to start fingerprinting U.S. visitors in response.

In this time of heightened domestic security concerns, it is reasonable for our government to take extra precautions to safeguard the well-being of U.S. citizens.

But the US-VISIT program looks suspiciously like favoritism toward U.S. allied nations and ignores the fairly well-documented presence of terrorists that possess European citizenship.

Richard Reid, the notorious "shoe bomber" who attempted to blow up an airliner carrying 197 passengers in December 2001, was a British citizen.

Many grounded or diverted flights, particularly the two Air France flights grounded Dec. 24 because of terror fears, have been European in origin.

That being the case, Ridge's explanation that US-VISIT exemption stems from the effectiveness of these nations' security procedures seems to lose credibility.

Also suspect is the presence on the exemption list of several nations with questionable security practices, Monaco and Brunei in particular, and the omission of Israel, whose El-Al airline has what many consider to be the most stringent, thorough security screening procedures in the world.

If DHS is serious about safeguarding national security, we need to monitor all possible sources of threats, even if that means registering foreign visitors from traditional allies such as Great Britain and France.

While such precautions would place huge demands on labor and time, the extra effort is necessary to eliminate favoritism and enhance safety.

For the program to work, the DHS must eliminate the exemption list.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"America is a large friendly dog in a small room. Every time it wags its tail it knocks over a chair."

ARNOLD TOYNBEE, BRITISH HISTORIAN

EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

# Indie record shops among casualties of giant chains

Mom called from Charlotte with some sad news the other night, and I'm still reeling.

"Guess who is going out of business?"

The words barely left her mouth before I shot back in response.

I had a hunch — my favorite mom and pop record store was closing up shop.

True, the announcement wasn't quite as painful as hearing about a death or some other tragedy, but it was pretty close. The news clipings she'll save will serve as obituaries for a fallen friend who passed well before his time.

I'm talking about Manifest Discs & Tapes, a rock enthusiast's haven and a well-established music chain in the Carolinas.

According to The Charlotte Observer, stores in Charlotte, Wilmington, Charleston and Greenville, S.C., will turn the lights off on worn but loved vinyl and mother lodes of tapes and compact discs in the coming weeks.

I've never been to the others, but I know mine pretty well. It was tucked away in a sketchy strip mall in South Charlotte. You had to want to drive there, but that was the beauty of it — so many did.

This wasn't the place to pick up the new Hilary Duff CD or explore the Van Halen catalog. 'Cause you can go to the big box for that.

And so many have. Manifest founder Carl Singmaster told the Observer that growing competition from the large music chains was one reason for closing down.

Those stores have flourished because they can buy in great quantities and then turn that new album around often for \$9.99 — a whole \$4 or \$5 less than the



MICHAEL DAVIS  
COUNTRY FEEDBACK

indie guys.

It's the Wal-Mart dilemma, 'cept this time they're not marking down toy guns and strawberry jelly, but instead *Revolver* and Pearl Jam.

No matter how you put it, the corporate takeover of U.S. commercial entities is leaving us with a pretty bland, watered-down selection as consumers.

I know I've sure done my little part to cause this, and I get the same guilty feeling when I step in Sam Walton's American Dreamland.

It's almost an inevitable reality of our free enterprise economy. Bigger is better, and cheaper is best.

And if I can save a few bucks, what will I lose?

For starters I lose, and we all lose the personal touch that you get from a locally owned retailer or small businessman.

My record store hosted album signings and free concerts, which is truly a rarity. A Fayetteville Wal-Mart held a summer 2002 Def Leppard concert, but I consider that more pain than pleasure.

Plus these folks knew their stuff. Try asking Circuit City employees their opinion on the best Springsteen album — they probably only carry about five.

It's the intangibles that we take for granted but then long for when we're standing in line at Dullsville Super Center, waiting

for the uniformed employee with the pasted-on smile to ring us up.

Then we'll yearn for the places with the community character and the workers who know what they're talking about and love it.

Some corporate megastores are trying hard to spruce up their images with slick ad campaigns. Like there are really employees who fulfill their sense of civic duty by sending a shopper twenty aisles away for a can of bug spray.

Some signs suggest that small businesses aren't suffering as much as all the boarded-up windows and clearance sales indicate.

Census data released last September found that the number of businesses with no paid workers actually increased by 2.7 percent nationwide between 2000 and 2001, from more than 16.5 million to almost 17 million.

While these figures don't really take into account most locally owned music stores, many of which have decent-sized staffs, they do indicate that many smaller outfits — whether print shops, building contractors or family burger joints — are doing just fine in the shadows of the giants.

But the economy's still evolving, and I guess it takes time for some changes to hit us.

The departure of Manifest won't hit me until my next trip home, when I'm smacked by the reality that I can't comb hundreds of used CDs or sample some eclectic tunes.

So I suppose I'll settle for the big box, where the irony will hit me right after the Blink 182 soundtrack reaches my ears.

After all, I'm to blame.

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# POLICY OR POSTURE?

President Bush's new immigration proposal is good in concept, but it comes at a bad time and the political motivation behind it is dubious.

In a recent White House ceremony, President Bush unveiled a sweeping proposal to create a legal temporary work program for undocumented, illegal immigrants.

Under Bush's general plan, undocumented workers living in the United States with clean criminal records and a source of employment could apply for temporary worker permits, allowing them to continue working in the country for three years.

Earned legalization, at least conceptually, has a great deal of merit. Workers who contribute vital low-cost labor and tax revenue should have the option of pursuing citizenship after demonstrating the ability to live lawfully and retain employment.

The president's plan does not go this far, offering only "temporary worker status."

Additionally, removing workers from the shadow-filled world of cash payments and nonexistent labor standards would represent a substantial blow to the fear-filled system many hardworking illegal immigrants face today. An earned legalization program could accelerate the cultural assimilation process greatly, especially in terms of learning English.

The Center for Immigration Studies estimates almost 200,000 undocumented workers reside in North Carolina.

So even though Bush presented this program in the broadest of terms without focus on policy specifics, such a sweeping immigration reform could have a huge impact on North Carolina.

While many on President Bush's conservative flank questioned the potential homeland security danger of "earned amnesty," documenting these workers in an official capacity gives both employers and the government a greater ability to keep track of their whereabouts.

But the plan's conspicuous lack of detail raises suspicion about its timing and President Bush's motivation for its announcement.

Even in broad terms, implementing this program will require a "bureaucratic explosion."

With the federal deficit on track to continue growing, this plan carries a massive potential cost, along with taxing an already overworked Bureau of

Citizenship and Naturalization.

In fact, the National Border Patrol Council, an organization representing the Border Patrol's 9,000 nonsupervisory agents referred to Bush's plan as a "slap in the face."

The president might never give us the opportunity to judge this policy on anything but broad sense of principle. In all likelihood, the American people won't get the chance to analyze specifics of the plan because politically, Bush's immigration reform represents a ticket to nowhere.

This plan has no legislative future. In the U.S. House of Representatives alone, almost 50 conservative Republicans would oppose the plan, backed by Democrats unwilling to hand an opposition president a major election-year victory.

Given that political reality, Bush's plan constitutes little more than political posturing.

In an administration in which political guru Karl Rove has perfected the art of sacrificing policy for short term political gain, this proposal seems to have at its base the desire to acquire Hispanic support.

As a president who appears absorbed by the 2004 re-election effort, Bush floated a proposal that could offer a brighter future to many struggling and frightened families, yet likely did so with the knowledge that it had zero legislative potential.

Instead of supporting this program out of a genuine need to account for vast numbers of undocumented agricultural workers in this country, the Bush administration saw an opportunity to gain quick political capital in states with large Hispanic populations and shaky prospects for a Bush victory in 2004, namely, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Florida.

While the principles behind Bush's immigration proposal are sound, the plan offers little hope to undocumented workers living in the United States.

Whoever occupies the White House in 2004 — whether it is Bush or one of the myriad Democratic hopefuls — should develop a comprehensive proposal to deal with the issue of illegal immigration in a manner based on feasibility and a genuine desire to assist hardworking immigrants to earn citizenship.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, and were reached after open debate. The board consists of seven board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2003-04 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

## Protest was effort to gain elusive media coverage

TO THE EDITOR:

For the second time now, I am writing in defense of our actions at the UNC vs. Virginia basketball game based on the board editorial in The Daily Tar Heel.

However, it seems that last year's board editorials were much more balanced and reasonable.

This year's editorial contains false information and a generally hateful tone. It is saved from this tone only by its own hypocrisy — rendered too unclear by statements made unknowingly in our defense like, "War issues are certainly more important than a game of basketball."

It seems that most detractors take issue with the venue at least, if not the message. As a solution, the editorial proposes the Pit as the haven for free speech.

I say: Get your head out of the sand! Those of us who have organized or at least participated in anti-war activities know how frustrating it can be to have your voice fall short at a time like last year, prior to the war in Iraq.

As we know now, we were consistently misinformed in the media about the threat Iraq posed to Americans. Meanwhile, protests around the world were misrepresented, or ignored on the major media channels.

What our actions were about was

access — access to the media. ABC, NBC, FOX and others all have refused to air any free speech advertising or public service announcements. In fact, they consider any advertising of this nature, even if it's paid for, too controversial to air.

What this means is if an ad is not selling anything, then no one will air it (except on occasion by CNN). The media has shut out any public use and betrayed its own viewers.

We cannot rely on major media any more to inform us truthfully. However, we can rely on their faithfulness to their sponsors.

Free speech is meaningless if you can't be heard above the din of major media.

Scott O'Day  
Senior  
Music

## Men's basketball team, foes deserve more respect

TO THE EDITOR:

Two minutes to go in the victory over Georgia Tech on Sunday, the crowd began to chant "overrated." As soon as the crowd started, coach Roy Williams turned to them and yelled, "Shut up."

And why not? That chant does not have a purpose in the course of the game. If your primary goal is to heckle the opposing team, then you succeeded, but at the same time, you are taking away from the accomplishments of our team.

Don't get me wrong, I love to heckle opposing teams, but I refuse to do it at the expense of the Tar Heels. The men's basketball team fought incredibly hard in their victory and played better Sunday night than they have thus far this season.

Georgia Tech, whether ranked 8th or not, is still a very good basketball team, and it took a great UNC team to beat them Sunday night.

Don't take away from the great accomplishments of our athletic teams. Let's take the "overrated" chant out of our heckling vocabulary come game-time.

Jon-Michael Bolding  
Senior  
Chemistry

## Students should see past present biases on campus

TO THE EDITOR:

I have read with interest the article written by Brentley Tanner ("Liberal students, professors bully conservative minority," Jan. 8), as well as the two responses to this article.

I think one has to focus on the main point of the article — that there is a bias against conservatives on this campus.

It appears to most that the Department of Political Science is overly liberal, which may not reflect directly in the classroom in open

remarks but would still have an impact on treatment outside of class and selection of course content.

This is why we need more conservative students in the political science major, to bring balance to the University environment.

I would agree that this bias and treatment is present, even if not all conservative students have a negative experience. No one student is a witness to every other student's experiences.

I have been in the University system, here or elsewhere, for about 30 years. As a staff member, I have seen this mistreatment in the work environment and in other situations. I have experienced it myself, and it was completely unsolicited.

The Democratic vernacular typically is caustic, sarcastic and accusatory. As students back in the 1970s, we falsely learned somehow that being critical of others demonstrates our intellectual superiority.

Remarks like "Bush is Hitler" or "Bush is a liar" are slanderous and don't perpetuate anything except hatred and foolish recklessness, as in the basketball incident. A more accurate remark is "Saddam is like Hitler," since the evidence is overwhelming.

The educated way to present one's views is to state a position and then give undeniably accurate documentation to support that view.

Just because one "speaks out" does not mean he or she is correct. I think the responsible behavior

for mature students — if they are really interested in truth — would be to give both political sides the chance to demonstrate true evidence for their views before forming an opinion.

When students then speak, they can reflect an informed view, not just emotions based on slander and bias from one side. Students are here to think with their minds, not their emotions.

Marianne Tioran  
Employee  
Dental Research Center

CORRECTION

In the Jan. 12 Viewpoints, Tom Jensen is identified at the end of his column as the chairman of Students for a Better Carolina. He is, in fact, chairman of Students for a Progressive Chapel Hill, as is stated in his byline.

**TO SUBMIT A LETTER:** 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 them to [editdesk@unc.edu](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).

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