

EDITORIALS

WRESTLING CONTROL

Education Committee members did well to withdraw proposed state-mandated caps on out-of-state enrollment from House consideration.

A bill proposing a state-mandated nonresident enrollment cap was wisely re-referred on Tuesday back to the Education Committee in the N.C. House of Representatives.

The bill would limit the number of out-of-state students in any given freshman class to 18 percent for all UNC campuses except the N.C. School of the Arts.

The proposal was misguided and could have served as demagogic rhetoric appealing to parochial sentiments. When lawmakers set policy, they must think further ahead than the next election day.

The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board has supported an increase in the out-of-state enrollment cap; it's a position embraced by student leaders, University administrators, and by a slim majority — 52 percent — of North Carolina residents, according to the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication's Carolina Poll.

However, members of the N.C. General Assembly have repeatedly threatened to stand in the way of any proposal that might alter the percentage of North Carolina residents on a UNC-system campus.

But imposing a legal limit to nonresident enrollment isn't just wrong — it's irrelevant and misleading. Out-of-state enrollment is already limited to 18

percent at UNC-system schools and the UNC-system Board of Governors tabled a proposal to increase that number in the spring.

This is the most invasive action legislators have taken to wrest control of University administration away from those who know it best.

There are legislators who see proposals such as this most recent one as a way to protect the children of North Carolina taxpayers. The representatives who oppose out-of-state enrollment increases on the merits are entitled to their opinions.

But with local primaries only a month away and statewide elections looming for the fall, this is a dangerous time to embrace such a divisive issue.

Unfortunately, there are those who will vote on this issue to motivate a certain segment of the population and spur them to the polls in a way that is nothing short of disingenuous.

Education policy should not be about fear and angry words, but if the legislature considers this bill this close to election day, then no doubt, that will be the result.

If the House must take up this issue, then it should wait to consider a bill during the long session of the General Assembly, when it can be examined as a matter of policy, not politics.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"A real leader faces the music, even when he doesn't like the tune."

ANONYMOUS

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Evann Strathern, evann@email.unc.edu



A GOOD SECOND TRY

Legislators took a step in the right direction by passing an improved version of the state's budget that cuts less from education spending.

Last week, members of the N.C. House of Representatives told reporters that their budget would make few people happy.

After the House approved the measure, Democratic leader and Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, told the Charlotte Observer, "It's still a bare-bones budget and there are a lot of unaddressed needs in our state, (but) we did the best we could with the money we had."

But if one group of people left budget talks grinning, it was educators from the UNC system.

When the Appropriations Committee presented its initial offering a couple of weeks ago, it appeared the system would be in for another year of significant budget cuts.

The House also failed to provide money for two of Gov. Mike Easley's primary education proposals: funding for the More at Four pre-kindergarten program and the governor's plan to reduce third-grade class sizes.

The cuts to higher education that the legislature proposed also were roughly twice what the governor included in his initial proposal.

Those three things in tangent were enough for Easley to express disapproval to legislators, and they left many members of the N.C. General

Assembly uneasy. This in turn resulted in House leaders to refer the bill back to Appropriations by way of committee substitute, where a large number of amendments could be added and rolled into the final budget.

In the end, legislators chose to be generous with the state's colleges and universities. The budget approved by the House on June 8 spares the university system \$27 million in cuts.

It also provides \$65 million to fund enrollment growth and allocates an additional \$21 million for need-based financial aid.

Even so, the budget did include a 1.7 percent cut, and that will force campuses to search for ways to make up the difference.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, that likely will mean the elimination of some teaching assistants or faculty positions. But University leaders have expressed their willingness to shoulder their part of the budget burden and the cuts were not unexpected.

Ultimately, this year's House budget was a compromise for Republicans and Democrats — one that left few people completely satisfied but stretched funds to ensure that almost everyone got some piece of the pie.

The Senate should follow that example.

COMMENTARY

Dealing with racism means sorting through ambiguity

Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never harm me. How easy would life be if only it were true?

Race would certainly be a different issue today. How can you say there's a problem when segregation is over and anti-discrimination laws carry the day?

Just look on death row in any state in the country.

The issue today isn't about fixing unjust laws — it's how to fix a gaping deficit in resources and attention given to those that don't have it so well.

We can't wash our hands of gaps that we know exist within the system. It might not have been our generation that created these problems, but it's the duty of civically responsible people to repair damage to our society.

That's no easy task. Statistics showing discrimination on every level are available for the entire world to see, but why are they still around? Where can we find racism and how do we address it?

The moral foundation provided by Martin Luther King Jr. and the principle of civil disobedience gave the civil rights movement the moral high ground when our choices were black and white.

It's in the gray areas in-between that racism remains embedded. Some of this was apparent during the debate about California's Proposition 209 — the referendum that ended affirmative action in the University of California system.

Advocates of the measure seemed to love citing Asian-Americans in making their case. They could say everything they wanted about the smart white kid that was denied admission in favor of less qualified black kid — without ever actually saying it.

In making that case, they conveniently chose to ignore public opposition to the referendum from Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien of UC-Berkeley and other prominent Asian-American leaders.

Asian-Americans in aggregate didn't find the anti-affirmative action case very compelling either, as exit polls by the Asian Pacific



JEFF KIM
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR

American Legal Center showed 76 percent of Asian-Americans voting against the measure.

The lack of understanding between America's ethnic groups can partially be attributed to our desire to believe that problems don't exist.

"In the Fray" magazine contributor Chang Liu argues in his essay, "Where Multiculturalism gets Airbrushed," that broadcast feeders feed us with the ideas we want to believe in.

The message of "MTV multiculturalism," as he calls it, can be filtered down into either a friendly, "Hey, we're not so different ... We're all dancing to Nelly, aren't we?" or a spiteful, "Hey ... stop talking about your own race, we're all trying to dance to Nelly here!"

For those of us that often find ourselves at the short end of the stick, the blabber coming out of the tube tends to sound more like the latter.

I get pretty annoyed when Bob Dumas of the Raleigh radio station G105 talks about the unattractiveness of Asian women.

Even more so when Details magazine dedicates a whole page to questioning whether the man in the picture is "Gay or Asian."

Those classless boneheads aren't very harmful in themselves but they reflect on a society that doesn't respect ethnic minority opinions as equal on the whole.

Underlying tensions have erupted into major violence as recently as 1992, when the "Rodney King riots" smashed through Los Angeles.

The conflict began when charges of excessive force were dismissed for four police officers involved in the beating of Rodney King despite the videotape evi-

dence that was broadcast nationally.

Black leaders had expressed outrage several months earlier when Soon Ja Du, a Korean grocer found guilty of manslaughter in the death of 15-year-old Latasha Harlins, was leniently sentenced to probation.

That incident was also caught on videotape — from the often-overlooked footage of Harlins beating Du across the counter to the fatal shot that took Harlins' life on her way out of the store.

For rioters, these rulings confirmed the reality of a justice system bent against them and they exploded in rage.

Korean-Americans became an immediate target of the rampage that ensued.

The community has been asking questions for more than a decade about the police dispatches that left shop owners covered only by television cameras, crouched behind their windows wielding shotguns.

Would they have been left out there if they had been white?

Sticks and stones will break my bones so I'm inclined to worry when the errant word goes unnoticed. What happens when push comes to shove?

That's why issues that seem trivial to some are focal points for others. It's the immediate jerk toward dismissing controversy that's disconcerting.

Instead of battling racism head-to-head, the task has become convincing people that some issues are actually about race — even if there's also a component of history or heritage.

If it walks like a duck and talks like a duck then like it or not, it's a duck.

And maybe those gray areas aren't really all that gray. It's easy to get defensive when heavy words like racism get thrown in your path and you feel you've done nothing wrong.

Just don't try and wash your hands of it.

Contact Jeff Kim at jongdae@email.unc.edu

LACKING A DECISION

Town officials dodged responsibility for making a decision on the fate of Airport Road by deferring to another committee to study the issue.

Town Council took a step back from resolving an ongoing controversy on Monday by creating a committee to study an appropriate memorial for late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. rather than voting on a proposal to rename Airport Road in his honor.

In spite of the recommendation to dedicate the road by the council's Renaming Committee, members endorsed a proposal by Mayor Kevin Foy that indicated the necessity to continue studying the issue and the town's reaction to the proposal.

The (Raleigh) News & Observer reported that Foy told the Town Council audience that, "I have personally been persuaded that this community needs to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and that (renaming) Airport Road is an appropriate way to do that ... I have also been, however, surprised and concerned about the reaction in this community to this proposal. I think it is about race. I think it is important to talk about why it is important to honor Dr. King, and in what way we do that."

But the council's decision not to directly address the issue shows a lack of leadership and leaves questions as to whether an up-or-down vote will ever actually be cast.

Council members Sally Greene, Bill Strom and

Mark Kleinschmidt, who were all members of the Renaming Committee tried to convince Foy and other members that a vote for the new committee was a vote against renaming Airport Road for King.

"I really think this was a great process," Kleinschmidt said. "We've now had three well-attended public forums ... I think it's been an extraordinary public discussion."

Any decision reached by the council would have upset some part of their constituency, but by delaying action, members left little room for any new discussion or insight and didn't bring any sense of closure to an issue that's become racially divisive.

Fred Battle, president of the Chapel Hill chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which initiated the proposal to rename Airport Road, told the N&O that "Race relations in Chapel Hill are worse now than in the 1950s and '60s ... The whole thing is about a predominantly black organization making name changes in a white community."

Town Council should take a bold step by taking decisive action and explaining the logic of its decision to residents of Chapel Hill.

Town leaders are elected to set town policy — not to avoid answering the hard questions.

EDITORS' 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 two board members, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2004 summer DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Grievance backlog serves as impediment to workplace justice

TO THE EDITOR:

For three years, employees have raised concerns about the backlog of grievances. Recently, an employee was dismissed with two alleged infractions still awaiting adjudication. One of these grievances is over 10 months old. This apparently is not the first instance of an employee being dismissed with grievances pending.

Unlike many of our peer institutions where the grievance process relies on outside mediators and arbitrators, we rely on our own employees to serve on grievance panels. Grievances are backlogged because there are not enough trained employees to handle the number of grievances.

Clearly, the problem is that the Human Resources Department is not providing the required training to an adequate number of employees.

Last September, nearly 30 employees volunteered for training, myself among them. I was told the class was already full and that I would be assigned to the next class. I have never been called for training, and I recently learned that the first class was cancelled.

While grievances are dismissed if employees do not file on time or do not

meet appeal deadlines, the University misses deadlines without penalty. A fundamental principle of American jurisprudence is that justice delayed is justice denied. This principle should also apply to workplace justice.

After three years, the excuses from Human Resources are no longer valid, and the pattern of behavior appears intentional. The ongoing failure to deal with the grievance backlog may be placing the state at legal and financial risk.

I realize that University officials cannot comment on specific cases. Nevertheless, I hope they will take steps to see that the grievance backlog is eliminated.

Steve Hutton
Chairman, SEANC District 25

Asian students prove affirmative action not necessary

TO THE EDITOR:

Ada Wilson's editorial column, "Race-consciousness needed to reflect minorities' reality," is yet another manifestation of the liberal machine and its propagation of the victimization mindset.

As reported in the March 29, 2004 issue of Forbes Magazine, John Moores, chairman of the Board of Regents of the

University of California, states some 1,421 Californians with SAT scores above 1,400 applying to the same departments at Berkeley weren't admitted. Of those applicants, 662 were Asian-American, while 62 were from underrepresented minorities.

Asians perform consistently across the board because they typically have a strong familial structure and value system.

It's time to stop blaming society for perceived disenfranchisement and look inward. I hope UNC admits the best and the brightest without regard to race; anything less would be uncivilized. Otherwise, coordination failures in labor will result in our capitalist economy if governmental influence hampers natural market forces.

Joshua S. Davis
Junior
Biochemistry

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 forum to: editdesk@unc.edu.

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OFFICE: Suite 2409 Carolina Union
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