

BOARD EDITORIALS

A NECESSARY PAUSE

North Carolina legislators should look at well-known breakdowns in the judicial system to see that a moratorium on executions is needed.

A moratorium is necessary to protect justice while the state conducts a study to work out potential problems with the death penalty. The N.C. General Assembly would do well to pass both measures to clear up problems in the judicial system. The moratorium and the study are complementary and equally vital for ensuring a fair system. The case against North Carolina's judicial system is a strong one. In the last year alone Charles Walker's execution was stayed for lack of reliable evidence, Alan Gell had a death penalty conviction dismissed with revelations of prosecutor abuse and Darryl Hunt was released from life imprisonment when DNA evidence proved his innocence. The Senate bill now under deliberation proposes a two-year halt on executions while the General Assembly studies the current system. Moratorium opponents fear that the measure would extend beyond the proposed two years, despite sunset clauses attached to the legislation. They advocate for an investigation without a concurrent moratorium. But the protection offered by the sunset clause

ensures that later officials will not abuse the enactment of the moratorium. Death penalty advocates easily could put legislators on the defensive if they tried to stretch the moratorium beyond its scheduled lifetime. The concerns about injustice via the death penalty are such that a moratorium is necessary for a study to be effective. It would defeat the point of the study if an innocent person were executed in that time. The moratorium wouldn't necessarily stop capital punishment permanently in North Carolina, but simply offers a safeguard for the protection of the rights of those that may be subjected to faulty laws or practices. The General Assembly should approve the moratorium in order to protect the validity and effectiveness of the study. Regardless of one's position on capital punishment itself, the greatest concern should be that innocent people are not executed. Capital punishment, without protection for the innocent, shouldn't be considered acceptable for the residents of North Carolina.

RESPONDING TO RAPE

Students, residents and authorities should work together to ensure that recent events don't result in an atmosphere of fear on campus.

The rape that reportedly took place Wednesday morning came on the heels of the Feb. 25 assault on Franklin Street. What's particularly disturbing is that it was the fourth rape to be reported since Jan. 1 — and that this number equals the total rapes reported during the entire fiscal year 002-03. This fact highlights the need for every member of this community to be extra careful. People shouldn't let their lives be ruled by fear, but they must be reasonably cautious. It's clear that it isn't safe for people to walk alone late at night or early in the morning on Franklin Street and in some nearby areas — including parts of campus. In this case, the woman who was attacked reported the incident. There are a number of understandable reasons why many people who are sexually assaulted do not go to the authorities — but if the police don't know that a rape or sexual assault has taken place, they won't be able to take steps to investigate the crime and to bring perpetrators to justice. Even if people decide not to report rapes or sexual assaults, they should look into various tools that are

available to help them recover emotionally and psychologically from the incidents. The National Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-656-HOPE) is maintained by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. The hotline provides free, confidential counseling at any time of day or night. The Orange County Rape Crisis Center has two locations — including one at 825-A Estes Drive, which can be contacted at (919) 968-4647. To learn more about the center, visit <http://www.ocrc.org>. As a result of the recent Franklin Street attacks, town officials should act quickly. They must work with the Chapel Hill Police Department to fill vacant officer positions and to increase police presence downtown. Money is tight, but the safety of town residents should be the highest priority. Chapel Hill is still a wonderful town. It's still a great place to live, work, play and learn. But it is just as vulnerable to the undesirable elements that practically every large community has to handle. Students and residents alike must consider taking extra steps to protect themselves from those elements.

INELIGIBLE VOTERS

Neighborhoods considered for annexation deserve a say, but residents shouldn't be allowed to vote in elections that might not affect them.

Elections are certainly a time when politicians can advocate for or against actions. But giving out-of-town residents a vote isn't an appropriate way to fight municipal change. If the N.C. General Assembly passes a bill submitted by Rep. Bill Faison, D-Orange, it might turn some town elections into highly politicized, single-issue polls on annexation. The measure would require that unincorporated residents get a vote for every seat on a town's governing board before that town can annex their land. Such a rule would be unfair and would delay decisions on annexation through several election cycles. Carboro, for instance, holds elections in 2005 and 2007 on a staggered schedule, requiring a two-election delay before annexation decisions could be made. Provoked by the controversial Carboro annexation of several area neighborhoods, the bill is part of a growing call to reform the annexation process. Proponents argue that it's unfair for towns to take over their neighborhoods without asking them, and they have a valid point. But residents should be given a fair means to speak up without unduly influencing

a town's governing body. Under Faison's plan, any successful anti-annexation candidate would have to rely heavily on unincorporated constituents' votes. By this method, if an annexation actually were halted, towns would get stuck with elected officials that were voted in by nonresidents. Representative Cary Allred, R-Alamance, is a co-sponsor of Faison's resolution, but he's also backing a more reasonable solution that would require a referendum in neighborhoods considered for annexation. This would give residents a voice in whether or not they should be annexed — without giving them an undue say in the affairs of the town — rather, it would limit the unincorporated voice to decisions that are guaranteed to affect them. Allowing those residents to participate in town elections would affect day-to-day issues that they might not end up participating in. A referendum would be sufficient to give unincorporated residents a voice until they become participants in the town's affairs. There's no need to warp the electoral process to achieve that goal.

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 2004-05 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Assault shouldn't lead to a change in crime legislation

TO THE EDITOR:

In regards to Thomas Stockwell's assault case, I — being a victim of a Franklin Street assault that left me in the hospital a little more than a year ago — deeply sympathize with him and hope that he recovers well physically and psychologically. I also think that this incident can be used as a good launching pad for several social changes. However, I do not believe that those changes should be extended equally to any hate crime legislation. This legislation forces our court system to prosecute motives and not actions. In other words, we will be valuing thoughts, which is not what our courts were designed to do. By forcing our courts to do this, we put them in a constitutional bind — and we give them the difficult task of deciding what type of hatred the assailant had for his victim, because all crimes of this nature have some form of hate, or at least disregard for human dignity, at their very core. I also believe that categorizing something as a hate crime marginalizes other forms of abuse and physical assaults. This especially affects women at harm. We must remember that even though an attacker might not hate their victim's race or group identity, they still hate or disregard the person. And that is of the greatest

importance in the matter.

Justin Sands
Senior
Religious studies

Court ruling is example of movements being co-opted

TO THE EDITOR:

Two events emerged last week in our ongoing "culture wars." On Wednesday, the U.S. House passed a jobs bill that included an exemption for "faith"-based organizations participating in federally funded job-training programs so that they could refuse to hire gay employees. Then, on Thursday, U.S. District Court Judge Frank W. Bullock delivered a coup for Alpha Iota Omega by issuing a preliminary injunction that restored the fraternity's standing as an officially recognized student group. AIO has taken offense at the notion that it must abide by the University's nondiscrimination policy. Its argument is that having to accept all campus students would violate its First Amendment rights. These two news items show how successful the radical right has been in co-opting the language of civil rights movements. These movements have mobilized to protect minorities and women, who have been oppressed by majoritarian power. Now, as if those inequalities

have been put to rest, it is heterosexual, Christian, white men who claim victimization and who say they cannot speak.

The Bill of Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establish the freedom of religion as a right of personhood. But wasn't this meant to protect individuals from oppression and persecution for practicing religion?

Now, it seems that this entitles individuals and groups, under the cloak of "faith," to discriminate against those they don't like. Meanwhile, those who want equal protection and freedom from discrimination are said to be wanting "special rights."

While I applaud your editorial, I am troubled by how one-sided the recent series of Daily Tar Heel articles has been on this case. These articles read like press releases distributed by the Alliance Defense Fund, and they reinforce its point of view as the objective reality. Why not also discuss how potentially affected students feel about being excluded from campus life?

Tara Kaahgal
Graduate
Journalism

Fighting violence shouldn't become politically correct

TO THE EDITOR:

First, I want to join the rest of Chapel Hill in condemning vio-

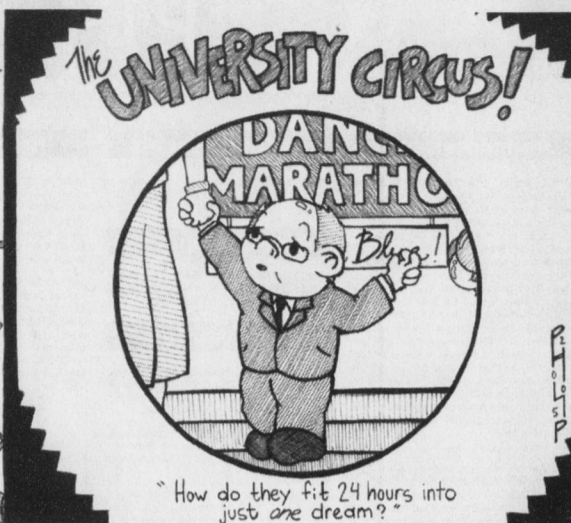
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Victory is sweetest when you've known defeat."

MALCOM FORBES, FORMER PUBLISHER, FORBES MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL CARTOON

Editor's Note:
DUE TO THE "EDGY" CONTENT OF HIS CARTOON ON THURSDAY, PHILIP MCFEE HAS BEEN SACKED. FOR NOW, ENJOY ANOTHER ADVENTURE WITH OUR PAL, LIL' JIMMY MOESER — AND... COMING THIS... IT'S THE WHOLESOME HILINKS OF BUNISE AND ROY-BOY!
AIN'T I A STINKER?
KICK ME



By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu

COMMENTARY

Only Libertarians talk about 'choice' in a consistent way

The abortion issue was in the news again Friday when the United States withdrew its demand that a United Nations declaration on women's equality state that it did not guarantee the right to abortion.



PHILIP HENSLEY
LIBERTARIAN STEEZE

Though I don't wish to address the debate that occurred on abortion at the United Nations last week, I did want to answer the question: What do Libertarians think about abortion?

It's somewhat of a tricky question, because there is no official Libertarian Party position in this case. Libertarians, like many Americans, are divided on the issue.

Even though we use the terms "pro-choice" and "pro-life" in the abortion debate, they are misleading. Most politicians who support a woman's "right to choose" don't let those same women choose whether or not to use drugs, whether or not to drop out of Social Security or where they send their kids to school. They're pro-choice on one issue only.

Most pro-life politicians have no problem with the government ending the lives of innocent people who were never a threat to us when it goes around the world bombing other countries. They're pro-life on one issue only.

Pro-choice Libertarians say that a woman owns her body and that the government should not be regulating her personal decisions regarding her body. Pro-life Libertarians say an unborn fetus should have the same rights as children already born. Both sides make a credible, pro-liberty argument.

The Libertarian Party is the only one that offers hope to people on either side of the abortion issue. Regardless of where they stand, Libertarians agree that the federal government should be kept out of abortion decisions and policies.

For one, the government has no constitutional authority over abortion. Even if you think that abortion is murder, well, the U.S. Constitution doesn't give the government the authority to act against it. Libertarians especially agree that abortions shouldn't be funded through tax money, because why should a person have to pay for someone else's abortion?

Personally, I think that abortion is wrong, because I don't know where else life could begin besides at conception. And it is precisely because I am against abortion that I would never want the government on my side in this debate. Government isn't good at anything it does. The war on poverty didn't reduce poverty, and the war on drugs didn't reduce drug use. In fact, it made problems worse. So why would a government war on abortion be any different? Former Libertarian presidential candidate Harry Browne once joked that due to government's inability to solve problems, a war on abortion would probably lead to men having abortions within five years.

Even though laws allowing or prohibiting abortion would never increase or decrease the number of abortions, politicians still love this issue, mainly because it is such a great fund-raising tool. It also gives them a chance to do some moral posturing, as if we should all be thankful that moral paragons such as George W. Bush, John Kerry and Ted Kennedy are going to decide

what is right and wrong for all. Politicians will never actually do anything about abortion, because they know that if they solved the problem, you wouldn't continue to give them your time and money to "fight" for your stance.

In the end, I would think that all of us want fewer abortions. Yet unlike Republicans and Democrats, Libertarians want to find real ways to achieve that goal. They want less restrictive adoption laws, private and voluntary educational efforts that show women alternatives to abortion and the end of any law that allows people the opportunity to evade the consequences of their actions.

The real abortion debate isn't about a woman's right to privacy or a fetus' right to life. If you're trying to get laws against abortion passed, you're wasting your time and money. You're just pretending to do something about abortion.

Laws against abortion won't reduce abortions. Imagine that, after a lifetime of begging, the government finally outlawed abortion. Wouldn't you feel disappointed when unborn children still were being killed?

So you need to decide what you really want. Do you just want to come up with more cute anti-abortion slogans to spout off at pro-choice activists during the next anti-abortion rally? Do you just want anti-abortion laws passed so that you can pat yourself on the back and make yourself feel good that you "did something" about the issue?

Or do you really want to reduce the number of abortions? If so, the only way to do it is to get government out of the way.

Contact Philip Hensley at <http://philiphensleyjr.blogspot.com>.

Mangum Medal to be given Wednesday for best speech

TO THE EDITOR:

All graduating seniors are invited to participate in the Willie P. Mangum Medal in Oratory at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

The Mangum Medal is the oldest student award on campus and is presented at the chancellor's award ceremony in April.

Participants must give an original speech on this year's topic, "What is religion's place in a modern society?"

A panel of judges select the winner. The Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies administer the award.

To enter or to get more information, please e-mail me at grondinj@email.unc.edu.

Julie Grondin
Senior
Biology

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 2409, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu.

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