

BOARD EDITORIALS

COURAGEOUS CHOICE

California legislators were right to pass a bill legalizing same-sex marriages. Perhaps one day, North Carolina will follow their lead.

Last week, while the nation's attention was squarely on Hurricane Katrina relief efforts and the nomination of John Roberts as chief justice of the United States, California legislators did something extraordinary: They became the first group in the country to pass a law legalizing same-sex marriage.

It wasn't an easy choice. It might not even have been the choice of a majority of Californians; recent polls show residents split about evenly on the issue. And it's a choice that's unlikely to become law, as Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has said he'll — ahem — terminate the bill with his veto.

But it was the right choice, and those of us here in North Carolina should think closely about the way it could affect the Tar Heel state.

This page feels strongly that same-sex couples should be afforded the same legal rights as any other couples. We respect religious opposition to such a move, but we also hold firm to our belief that it is not the place of the state to legislate the faith-based convictions of a dwindling number of Americans. Our leaders must be guided by principle, religious beliefs included, but they mustn't use that ideal to trample citizens' fundamental civil rights.

And make no mistake about it: Same-sex unions are a fundamental civil right.

So, too, are same-sex marriages.

The issue of marriages versus civil unions is a tricky one that divided this editorial board as much as it divides the country. Opponents of gay marriage include proponents of same-sex unions, many of whom argue that marriage is a uniquely religious institution that the state ought not regulate. Unions, they say, are a legal matter; marriages are not.

But that argument ignores the role government at all levels now plays in marriage. There are millions of heterosexual couples across the nation who never gave vows in a church. Is their matrimony illegitimate?

Some would say "yes." But most reasonable U.S.

citizens would say otherwise.

In short, the word "marriage" — despite its strong religious roots — is not exclusively for the faithful. It is accessible to everyone in American society — except same-sex couples.

To continue to deny it to those couples on religious grounds is both disingenuous and discriminatory. It creates a second class of citizens who, based solely on their choice of date or sexual partner, are not given an opportunity to express their love in a way they see fit.

In a perfect world, the state would give out "union licenses" and churches would get the choice to "marry" whoever they wanted. But our world isn't perfect, and so we must reach the best imperfect solution.

Tar Heel tragedy

Of course, here at home, a majority of the state's voters don't think same-sex marriage is right. And their elected officials backed them up a few years ago by passing a bill that defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

We don't agree with that, but we begrudgingly accept it as the will of the voters.

What we will not tolerate, however, are politicians who use the issue as a wedge — who tap into anti-gay sentiment the way Jesse Helms tapped into racist sentiment in many of his old campaign ads.

Many of those people seek an amendment to the N.C. Constitution that would serve the same purpose as the current Defense of Marriage Act on the books.

Some of them are merely afraid that a court might overturn DoMA; they are within their bounds, though they are wrong. For them, an amendment is a political tool.

For others, though, it is a political crowbar. And many of those people are sure to run for office again in next year's midterm elections.

We encourage you all to start early in defeating them. They don't deserve to serve the people of this state.

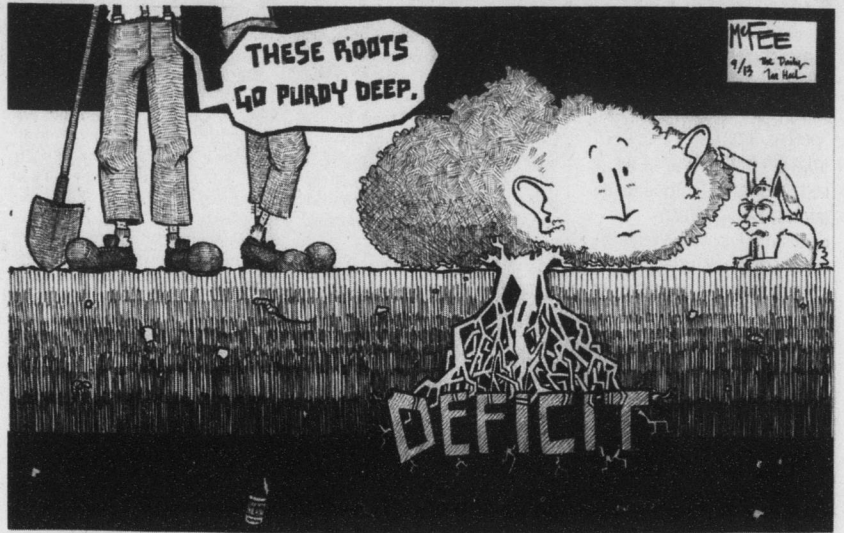
FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"When our two crazy, left-wing towns make (controversial or unique) stands ... it lets other municipalities not be the first."

JACQUIE GIST, CARRBORO ALDERMAN, AT A CANDIDATE FORUM FRIDAY

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

It's sad, but racial profiling is necessary for our safety

I want all Arabs to be stripped naked and cavity-searched if they get within 100 yards of an airport.

I don't care if they're being inconvenienced. I don't care if it seems as though their rights are being violated.

I care about my life. I care about the lives of my family and friends.

And I care about the lives of the Arabs and Arab Americans I'm privileged to know and study with. They're some of the brightest, kindest people I've ever met.

Tragically, they're also members of an ethnicity that is responsible for almost every act of terror committed against the West in the recent past.

And in the wake of the anniversary of 9/11, I think it's important to remember not only those who died, but how they died, why they died and where we stand now compared to where we stood then.

Four years and two days ago, we stood somewhere between apathy and ignorance. Sure, there were heinous acts of terrorism being committed in far-away lands, and sure, there was always the threat that some psychopath might do something.

After all, we're the generation of Timothy McVeigh, the Unabomber and Columbine. The news was littered with coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, nerve gas on Japanese subways and terror in the Balkans.

But those attacks weren't in the same buildings we toured on our eighth-grade class trips.

They didn't kill 3,000 of our relatives.

They weren't in our face. So Bushie waged war on 'em. He set out to knock the evil off its axis, and we're still there, duking it out.

And for good reason. You can debate a lot of things about post-9/11 foreign policy, but one thing you can't debate is that taking out terrorists — or blatant human-



JILLIAN BANDES
LICENSED TO JILL

rights violators — is a good thing. You also can't debate that of the 19 hijackers on those planes, all 19 were Arab.

And you can't debate that while most Arabs are not terrorists, sadly, most terrorists are indeed Arab.

Given this combination, I want some kind of security.

Done in a professional, conscientious manner, racial profiling is more likely to get the bad guys than accosting my 12-year-old pipsqueak of a brother on his way to summer camp.

When asked if she had a boyfriend, Ann Coulter once said that any time she had a need for physical intimacy, she would simply walk through an airport's security checkpoint.

I want Arabs to get sexed up like nothing else.

And Arab students at UNC don't seem to think that's such a bad idea.

"(Racial profiling) really doesn't bother me," said Sherief Khaki, a first-generation Egyptian-American and representative of the UNC-CH Arabic Club.

"So a couple of hours are wasted. Big deal." Said Muhammad Salameh, a junior biology major: "I can accept it, even if I don't like it. I don't want to die."

Professor Nasser Isleem, a man for whom I have complete and utter respect after merely two weeks of sitting in his Arabic 101 class, said, "Let them search."

"It depends on how I'm stopped, but if it is done in a professional

manner ..."

Then he nodded. "There were Muslims in those buildings, too."

Some people say that racial profiling will make terrorism a self-fulfilling prophecy, or that it's somehow unfair to designate certain individuals as being more likely to commit an act of terror than another.

They're wrong. If 19 blond-haired, blue-eyed, Caucasian Jews had plowed into the World Trade Center with two jumbo jets, I would demand to be interrogated every time I browsed Cheapflights.com.

After each interrogation, I would offer the official a cup of joe, then heartedly thank him for his efforts. And I would not be any more inclined to blow up innocent civilians as a result of it.

Neither would Sherief Khaki. Or Muhammad Salameh. Or Nasser Isleem.

Nearly every Arab American I've spoken with has done nothing but condemn the evil that was done just four years ago, and at least tacitly recognize that some profiling is necessary.

I have enough confidence in my country's imperfect but steadfast law enforcement systems to carry out such profiling the way it should be done: in a professional and thorough manner, without going down the slippery slope of pointless and disrespectful encroachment on the livelihood or decorum of everyday Arabs and Arab Americans.

Stop, as Coulter advises, treating racial profiling like the Victorians treated sex — by not discussing the topic unless you're recoiling in horror at the practice. Embrace the race.

Contact Jillian Bandes, a junior majoring in international studies, at jillianbandes@gmail.com.

THE TUITION TANGO

As students begin their yearly battle to keep costs low, there are certain things they ought to keep in mind if their lobbying is to be successful.

The Tuition Task Force had its first meeting of the year Tuesday, kicking off the lengthy process that ultimately will decide how much students pay to attend UNC.

So far, things look OK.

For example, the task force has pledged to pay more attention to graduate students — a pleasant deviation from the past, when leaders in the Graduate and Professional Student Federation felt as if they didn't have a voice at the table.

But there's an even larger issue at stake: A process that will produce only reasonable increases that address our needs as a first-rate university — and as a major asset for North Carolina.

For those students who have been around for the last few years, that probably sounds like a pipe dream. Every year, the Tuition Task Force comes up with an appreciated, moderate tuition request. Then the Board of Trustees goes its own, out-of-touch way and OKs a huge increase. Then the Board of Governors of the UNC system kills the prospect of any hike at all.

But there are ways to break the cycle.

■ **Students should work early with the Board of Trustees to push their ideas.**

Too often, it seems, the tuition battle begins in earnest after the trustees come up with a proposal that almost entirely ignores the reasoned ideas of the Tuition Task Force. But why wait that long? All the members of the Tuition Task Force, but especially students, should start talking to trustees now.

Getting them on board with a task force led by important students and key faculty members could be a godsend.

That goes for average students, too: Get off your duff and try to go to one of these meetings. If 10 students showed up to each discussion, they'd likely constitute half the room.

■ **People shouldn't be afraid to point out the fact that the emperor has no clothes.**

Let's be clear: Trustees love the University. But

that love is often misguided. Few of the 12 Board of Trustees members have demonstrated that they understand the perspective of students, or even the daily workings of the University.

Students shouldn't treat any campus leader as evil or conniving. But they also mustn't be afraid to tell people that they know more about a student's daily life — because they do. It's a good argument. And put politely, it could have a major impact.

■ **Students should support reasonable increases — and raise hell about unreasonable hikes.**

It would be great if there were no increases this year for any students. But barring a miracle, that outcome seems less than likely, especially in light of the recent spat over tuition that almost drove UNC-Chapel Hill to escape the Board of Governors' authority.

Given that we have genuine needs to be addressed — faculty retention, helping teaching assistants and reducing class sizes, in particular — money will have to be raised from somewhere. But if it comes from students, it shouldn't break their backs.

That means increases for both in-state and out-of-state students, though not necessarily equal ones. It means hiking costs at a rate people can afford. And it means not changing a proposal at the last minute to divert money to athletic fees — exactly the kind of shenanigan pulled by campus leaders last year.

Finally, it would be exemplary if the General Assembly remembered its constitutional mandate to keep tuition as low as possible. But we're not holding our breath.

■ **Everyone should remember the greater good.**

Higher education is necessary to the future of North Carolina, and it is not something that should be skimmed on. As the old economy — tobacco and textiles — of North Carolina wastes away, education will become even more important to our state and whatever prospects it has to thriving in the future.

What good does it do, then, to price people out of the University?

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions solely of The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board and were reached after open debate. The board consists of four board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the DTH editor. The 2005-06 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

The Daily Tar Heel

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READERS' FORUM

Americanization of words should not be half-baked

TO THE EDITOR:

It is time to head off another assault on the American language. I refer to the insistence on the form "Latino/a" in all references to the new academic minor. There are several reasons why "Latino/a" has no place in English.

We have just gone through several decades of purging our language of sexism. We have learned to replace "policeman" and "fireman" with "police officer" and "fire fighter."

I still find it awkward to attend an event presided over by a "chair."

In many cases, the simple plural solves the problem: "he and she" awkwardness disappears with "they."

Pity the Germans. All nouns have a gender. "Student" and "Studenten" mean male student, male students. The feminized version — not even possible in some European languages — becomes "Studentin" and "Studentinnen."

"She is Latino" may be bad Spanish, but it's good English. On one hand, we continue to comb the language for remaining gender distinctions, even now replacing "freshman" with "first-year student." On the other, we insist on creating problems that only add to

the confusion.

We could go after some of the linguistic fossils left over from Latin. I am happy with "syllabuses" and "curriculums" and will accept — reluctantly — "media is" and "medias are" along with "data is" and "datas are." And let's call any former student just an "alum."

Robert L. Stevenson
Kenan Professor
School of Journalism

Campus should continue giving to hurricane victims

TO THE EDITOR:

We would like to send out a brief thanks to all who have been helping in the hurricane relief effort of Yes You Can.

We only let people know that the door to giving had been opened, and they responded creatively and without hesitating. Thanks to all who gave and are still giving.

Your actions were felt and are still needed.

Madison Perry
Senior
Political Science/Spanish

Stockton Perry
Junior
Spanish

Speak Out

We welcome letters to the editor and aim to publish as many as possible. In writing, please follow these simple guidelines: Keep letters under 300 words. Type them. Date them. Sign them; make sure they're signed by no more than two people. If you're a student, include your year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff: Give us your department and phone number. The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Bring letters to our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union, e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu, or send them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515. All letters also will appear in our blogs section.

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RYAN C. TUCK
EDITOR, 962-4086
RCTUCK@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY, THURSDAY 1-2 P.M.
PIT SIT: FRIDAY, 12 TO 1 P.M.

JOSEPH R. SCHWARTZ
MANAGING EDITOR, 962-0750
JOSEPH_SCHWARTZ@UNC.EDU

REBECCA WILHELM
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR, 962-0750
BECCA07@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

CHRIS COLETTA
OPINION EDITOR, 962-0750
EDITDESK@UNC.EDU

BRIAN HUDSON
UNIVERSITY EDITOR, 962-0372
UDES@UNC.EDU

TED STRONG
CITY EDITOR, 962-4209
CITYDESK@UNC.EDU

KAVITA PILLAI
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR, 962-4103
STNTDESK@UNC.EDU

DANIEL MALLOY
SPORTS EDITOR, 962-4710
SPORTS@UNC.EDU

TORRYE JONES
FEATURES EDITOR, 962-4214
FEATURES@UNC.EDU

JIM WALSH
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, 962-4214
ARTSDESK@UNC.EDU

SCOTT SPILLMAN
CO-COPY EDITOR, 962-4103

CATHERINE WILLIAMS
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WHITNEY SHEFTE
PHOTO EDITOR, 962-0750

JEN ALLIET
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DANIEL BEDEN
CO-DESIGN EDITOR, 962-0750

FELDLING CAGE
GRAPHICS AND MULTIMEDIA EDITOR, 962-0246

CHRIS JOHNSON
ONLINE EDITOR, 962-0750
ONLINE@UNC.EDU

KELLY OCHS
WRITER'S COACH, 962-0372

EMILY STEEL
WRITER'S COACH, 962-0372

ELLIOTT DUBE
PUBLIC EDITOR, 260-9084
DUBE@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

OFFICE: Suite 2409 Carolina Union
CAMPUS MAIL ADDRESS: CB# 5210, Carolina Union
U.S. MAIL ADDRESS: P.O. Box 3257,
Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3257

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