

OPINION

Veto power for N.C. governor crucial for stable democracy

By Taylor Margis-Noguera
North Carolina Gov. James G. Martin is more deserving of the title "Speaker Easily Ignored."

Under the states constitution, he can praise or condemn the decisions of the legislature, but he must comply with them. Not since before the American Revolution, during the time of the royal governors, has North Carolina's chief executive had the power to veto.

This nation's founding fathers created a system of checks and balances so that no one branch of government would be all powerful. Those early leaders recognized the grossly unequal distribution of power within the English Monarchy, and they rebelled against it in favor of creating a fairer, more balanced government. By resisting every attempt to grant

the governor veto power, the legislature, in effect, thumps its nose at the likes of Jefferson, Madison and Hamilton.

When North Carolinians elect a governor they base their votes on the candidates' positions on issues. Once elected, the winner—without the veto—cannot protect those commitments against legislative attack. Without the veto, the chief executive is nothing more than a figurehead.

Gov. Martin has attempted, several times, to obtain the power of veto. He has failed because of adamant opposition from a power-grubbing General Assembly. His only chance for a more active role in governing North Carolina is to use his access of the press to sway public opinion. Only by pleading with the people to use their consti-

tutionally given power of the vote, to force state legislators to do what the majority wants, can Martin hope to make difference.

During a recent student interview, House Speaker Dan Blue referred to a veto-wielding governor as "a yoke" on the back of the legislature. He's right. It would be a yoke. It's also a needed part of the state's governmental tack.

A horse should not be allowed to run rampant through the fields, nor should the legislature be allowed to run the state's government unchecked.

The only people who can do something about the unchecked power of the state legislature are the voters. They should be writing, calling, nagging their legislators to give the governor the power he deserves.

State prisons should provide rehabilitation for inmates

By Kanika Jelks

The Governor of North Carolina says he wants to build more prisons. The space allotted in the present system doesn't allow adequate space for inmates.

Something needs to be done to correct the problem of overcrowded prisons.

There are 14,629 more inmates than state capacity allows, but does the answer to this prison crisis lie in building more prisons? The Governor, the police, and citizens who are not directly affected by the prison system would say yes. But it is not a question so easily answered. Perhaps the brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, and children of inmates would disagree.

According to the Governor, inmates are often let out with no reform or restitution of their crimes. Is the prison system really

helping prisoners, Citizens, or Anybody?

The Governor held a press conference to make public the severity of the prison crisis. Now that the problem has been successfully identified, efforts should be made to deal with a solution.

Focus shouldn't be only on giving inmates more room, but also some incentives, opportunities and counseling to prevent them from committing more crimes.

Every three years, more than 38 percent of federally held inmates are returning inmates.

Statistics show convicts weren't deterred by the consequence of prison when committing their crime. Prison seems to be only a meager inconvenience to inmates, considering most serve only one-eighth of their sentence. The number of people committing crimes should reflect the consequences of our prison system.

Prison shouldn't be such a luxury. A recent visit to the Polk Youth Facility in Durham brought it all into perspective for me. Inadvertently the facility misleads a visitor into thinking they are visiting a neighborhood youth center.

Beautiful, blooming flowers of yellow, red, purple, and gold border barbed-wire fences and gun towers which contain armed guards were. It is easy to forget you are at a jail until you are reminded by the bold signs which read: If you attempt to escape, you will be shot. This is no place to end childhood, yet 623 adolescents do every year.

The prison only houses 19 to 22

year olds. Many people think youth prisoners don't directly affect the adult federal prison system, and after leaving the prison system they won't return.

I disagree. With 38 percent of first offenders becoming repeat offenders, chances are a 19-year-old robber will one day return to the system, as an adult robber.

The prison dorms were depressing, but not shocking. The gun towers were threatening, but not terrifying.

The room that affected me most was the guard room. Along each wall there were picture identifications of each inmate. The I.D.'s looked much like a driver's license. The major difference being a driver's license initiates a right, the other retrieves rights. The I.D.'s put names behind the statistics, faces behind the crimes.

If there had been some type of crime prevention program, a mentor for some of these boys, would they all remain the subjects of prison I.D.'s on a wall.

Federally funded programs need to be implemented to help show possible criminals other options in life. Not a six-week counseling session, or a reprimanding parole officer, but a trained professional that can show these inmates someone cares. Vocational training, and job placement should take place to show inmates how much more of a productive life they can lead outside of jail.

Statistics wouldn't change overnight, but they would change. Prison should not be a viable option but a pending consequence. The Governor should stop looking at federal inmates as statistics, and instead as people capable of restitution and change.

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Colophon: The Rainbow
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Communication.



Darlene Harper poses a question to Dan Blue, speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives

Photo by Karen Tam

University officials incorrectly implicate entire 'white society'

By Bethanne Williams

When Rainbow Institute students visited North Carolina Central University, I thought I observed racial tension and stereotyping when black board members denounced what they called "white society."

Students and members of the NCCU board charged that much of the ills of the university were the results of racism directed at the school by "white society."

In actuality, what they referred to as "white society" was, more specifically, a local newspaper, Raleigh's News & Observer. It was the newspaper and its white-dominated culture they were talking about, and not whites in general.

What they were angry about was perfectly clear. They charged that they were not being given fair coverage in the case of an NCCU professor who was ac-

cused of misusing \$828,000.

Student Body President Phyllis Jeffer, Interim Chancellor Donna Benson, and several others seemed to believe that The News & Observer is an upper-class, white society paper that has a vendetta against the school because it is a predominantly black university.

As a student learning about news values, I believe that a series of articles about the controversy would have been published, no matter whether the university was predominantly Asian, Latino, Native American or white.

It bothered me that the board was making blatant indictments of white society as a whole. A small handful of people cannot represent an entire race. The focus should have been on one professor's misconduct. Race should not have been an issue, and university officials were unfair to argue that it was.

However, by the end of the week, guest speaker Professor Mercedes de Uriarte helped me to see why the NCCU officials might have felt the way they did.

Speaking to The Rainbow Institute, de Uriarte said, "Whites look at racism as someone calling another person a bad name, but blacks think of racism as great obstacles, for they must overcome institutions controlled by white people."

As true as this overview may be, people of all races, creeds and color must take into consideration that while fighting the battle for equality, we must be careful not to mislabel or make assumptions about others who appear to be blocking our path.

De Uriarte added, "Society's views will change when diverse groups of people share equal power in all aspects of life."

Rainbow students a mosaic of culture

By Darlene Harper

After declaring its independence America was described by Michel Guillaume de Crevercoeur as a melting pot because so many races from so many places had come together to form a nation.

One hundred-six years later, in the Rainbow Institute, 15 different races, faces and personalities have come together to form, if not a melting pot, then a mosaic of American youth.

This mosaic is filled with aggressiveness, assertiveness, confidence, humor, brains, and above

all beauty.

For three weeks of our lives, we had no other choice but to be aggressive.

Some were not as aggressive as others, at first, but they learned quickly—for instance, at a meeting with the governor at a news conference July 2.

This news conference was unique because we were up against real reporters, and some of our aspiring journalists were asking more questions than they were, which would have shamed me if I were the reporter.

Assertiveness also is part of this mosaic. With our bold personalities and inquisitive minds we knocked the prominent people off their feet.

The fact that we believed we were as prominent as they were, won us their respect.

One of the greater qualities that many of us have is confidence. Many of us walked into this institute confident that we would excel because we knew that we were the "chosen ones."

Some of us lacked confidence, at first, but that soon changed. I

think seeing the confidence of others enhanced our motivation, which would soon make us grow.

These three weeks have been filled not just with fun and laughs. We've had our ups and downs. But despite some of the downfalls, we still managed to put out a newspaper by putting our brilliant minds together, and although it was not shown, also our hearts together.

That was the beauty of being able to work together despite our differences. Making us a mosaic, making us diverse.

Need for diversity in newsroom apparent

By Ivelys Figueroa

So what's all the fuss over diversity in the newsroom? After all, the majority of Americans are Caucasians. So what's wrong with the majority of news being assigned by, reported by, edited by, and about Caucasians?

Everything. Demographers predict by the year of 2000, minorities will make up the majority of the U.S. population.

More than 5 million more Latino and African American babies will have been born. White births will have increased by only 60,000. Eighty-five percent of the U.S. work force will be composed of minorities.

Yet, in 1992, over half of U.S. newspapers do not employ minorities.

Newspapers in this country are in danger of becoming obsolete. They no longer provide a complete, accurate portrait of the society which has trusted them to do so.

Newspapers adhering to the good ol' boy school of thought, which employs and caters almost

exclusively to white males, cannot progress, nor can the communities they propose to serve.

In excluding minorities both in their coverage and their newsrooms, newspapers deny all citizens information vital in a multi-cultural nation. If the United States is to truly be successful, its constituents must possess the tools necessary to survive and grow in an intercultural and interracial society.

Knowledge is the most fundamental of all these tools.

Minorities in this country are subject to unique experiences that cannot be related by journalists who have neither undergone nor attempted to understand them.

It is not merely the experiences themselves that are important, however, but also the views induced by them. Minorities often possess a perspective that is at variance with both what is expressed in news stories and by other readers.

The best and most obvious solution to this dilemma is the vigorous recruitment and retention of minority journalists.

Bias present in all newspapers

By Sean Lopez

If you are reading this, don't let it affect your values, beliefs, perceptions, or judgment. Be careful. Concentrate on every word that is written.

Or would you rather relax and trust that the writer will not attempt to mislead you, or try to sway you into accepting his or her opinion? Most people would.

After all, newspaper journalists are basically good, fair people, right? And haven't they all taken courses in objective writing?

The fact is, there is no such thing as objective writing, and journalists have as much innate knowledge about right and wrong as any priest or politician, any patrician or pauper.

Objectivity means freedom from opinion, and all people, even journalists, have opinions. The problem is that these opinions are inevitably filtered into a journalist's writing, and register into the unsuspecting minds of his constituents.

This predicament leaves the American media with a lot more power than most people suspect. In the Tuesday, June 30, edition of The Chapel Hill Herald, Mark Schultz wrote a front page article

on the June 29, Supreme Court ruling. The article was clearly written from a pro-choice perspective.

It leads off by stating that the Supreme Court decision to uphold a Pennsylvania abortion law took a "wrecking ball" to the foundation of the landmark Roe v. Wade decision.

On the same day, the front page article written by Richard Carelli of The Herald Sun stated that the Supreme Court ruling "upheld the core of its Roe v. Wade decision."

Shultz's primary sources are pro-choice advocates who appear exclusively on the front page. Profile quotations are saved for the inside of the newspaper, where the average reader seldom look.

The last paragraph in the Carelli article quotes judge Antonin Scalia saying the Supreme court has no right to interfere in the abortion issue.

The last paragraph in Shultz's article gives the location of a pro-choice rally, and tells how to get transportation to it.

Is the information accurate? Yes. Are the articles fair? Perhaps. But the contrast between the writers' opinions is obvious for those who look, discreet for those who don't

The strongest and most harmful bias can be found in headlines.

In a Thursday, June 25, section of The Herald Sun, the dominant headline read: "Police brace for Jamaican drug violence." The headline included the word 'jamaican', and encourages the stereotype that all blacks are violent and deal drugs. The notion that Jamaicans are exclusively responsible for the violence is unproven, unfair and attributed to a single police detective.

Most readers see newspapers as a purely factual account of what's going on in the world. They accept what they are reading as pure information, thus allowing the writer's art to chisel away at their malleable perceptions.

In today's fast paced society, most people laugh at the prospect of reading a newspaper defensively. They argue that such an effort is too time consuming, and they make a good argument.

But for those who value mental sovereignty, it is important to remember that a newspaper is not the Bible. It is merely a story; a continuing saga told by a group of prophets, historians, realists, and idealist, who are unavoidably a part of the story they tell.