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The Battalion
100 years at Texas A&M

EDITORIAL

The name game

A&I students, alumni deserve say

Forty Texas A&I alumni and students vented their anger in a meeting of the Texas A&M University Board Regents last Friday. The meeting was held only after a lawsuit was filed by five A&I alumni and one student.

The group said the board did not give them adequate time to respond or address the idea of changing A&I's name. The Texas Open Meetings Act requires a 72-hour notice before a public meeting is held.

The A&I alumni and students sent letters and petitions to the board to stop the name change. Over 1,000 signatures were collected and several A&I student organizations sent letters opposing the idea.

Yet, the board was inconsiderate. It did not allow such a passionate and emotional issue to be full discussed by all participants.

Even the president of A&I, Dr. Manuel Ibanez, ignored the opinion of many students and alumni. He could have at least emphasized the matter to the board.

It seems only a lawsuit will get the board to listen.

The name change has irritated some A&I alumni so much that they have filed separate suits.

Dick Watson, A&I class of '61, filed a suit because he felt that his

constitutional rights were being violated. He said he was being forced to become an Aggie.

Watson was so angered, he presented the board with a burnt-orange T-shirt that said "The University of Texas at College Station."

Many other A&I alumni and students oppose the name change because they were never allowed to decide on it in the first place.

All past and present A&I students have the right to have a voice in such an important decision.

The benefits of changing the name can be immense for A&I. To be associated with A&M can mean more funding for the Kingsville university.

A greater bond between the two universities and extensive research can develop from such an association, too.

However, such a merger should not take place until all the people it would affect — students and alumni of both schools — have had their say.

The board needs to rethink its decision. But this time the board needs to listen to all sides.

In the end, if the board sees more harm to that university, then it should respect the wishes of A&I alumni and students and allow the name Texas A&I to remain.

Schools must teach sex education

Not all parents tell their kids about birds and bees

With the likelihood of Joycelyn Elders soon taking the helm of the Health Department, Americans have a few new decisions to make regarding sex education. College-age individuals should be particularly interested because their children will be in the first generation to experience an established policy on how issues of sex are taught in schools.

Basically, Elders is a hard-nosed, "tell it like it is" person with a new agenda in mind to bring accelerating sex-related health care problems — particularly those involving young people — to a more manageable speed. It's a fact that children in our society are learning more and more about sex whether their parents like it or not, and as a result teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases are as rampant as ever.

A long-time proponent of sex education in schools and planned parenthood, Elders is fielding opposition for several reasons, including the abortion issue and her notion of supplying condoms in schools. She has been such an outspoken advocate of the idea she has been coined the "condom queen" in response to her stance on making prophylactics available in schools. This raises the question of who determines what messages about sex are sent to young people.

Although it's not difficult to understand the conservative right's motivation regarding parents as the sole sex educators, the reasoning involved is unfortunately erroneous and outdated. Some parents do an excellent job of informing their children on the important emotional and physical aspects of sex, as well as the possibility of treacherous consequences.

However, when education is left to parents, the child is forced to adhere to a particular viewpoint that may be based primarily on particular religious, cultural, or psychological restraints. Due to such factors, the general diversity of attitudes on sex in our society is appalling, leading to false beliefs and dangerous practices.

Along with the idea of standardized sex education in schools follows a lengthy trail of questions and trodden moralities. At some point the government will have to determine what should be taught. Would it be right to subject all states to Big Brother's centralized, federal lesson plan? Or should individual states decide what is best for them, and allow Californian children to have a radically different sex education than North Carolinians?

Bigger government is not the best answer to the country's sex problems, but because Americans will never be able to agree on the ethics involved, schools should teach

children the facts of health and sex, and leave morality up to the individual — or the parents.

Most of you out there already have a fairly clear-cut idea of what you will teach your children about sex. And chances are that your ideas about sex are somewhat more liberal than your parents' because of social and generational factors if nothing else. This also implies that your children's attitudes may drift from yours as well. The point is that principles regarding sex have loosened steadily over time, and will likely continue to do so. The choice becomes whether to send children out into the new century armed with knowledge of what they may encounter, or helpless with the archaic notion that "my child" will wait until she's married, or, "my son" would never sleep around. Although it's possible they may "never," statistically they will — by a landslide. Is it worth the risk?

Perhaps the most widely touted rationale for keeping sexual information and certainly condoms out of schools is that by teaching students about sex outside of morality and distributing protection, adults are giving young people a positive signal to engage in sex. This argument appears to have merit on the surface, but is really quite flimsy.

Let's assume an individual transfers from a private school with high moral standards but no formal sex education to a public school which freely teaches about sex and distributes condoms through the nurse. Either this individual will continue to adhere to principle and be unfazed by external stimuli, or decide, "Gee this sounds like fun, and everyone's doin' it."

In the first case, the person is comfortable with already imprinted morality and is in control. In the second case, not only is the student making his own decision, but apparently never connected with the former school's ethics to begin with. If the atmosphere of sex education and condoms caused the student's moral degradation, what's going to happen after graduation? Not only will the person have no "morals" but no condoms either. On the other hand, can children be kept safely in "private school" morality until they're either married or dead?

This issue of formally educating our young people on the topic of sex is a loaded one. It would certainly be wonderful if all parents all over this country would tell children exactly what they need to know about health and sex. But they don't, they just don't. Until a comprehensive, standardized sex education curriculum is implemented in our schools, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases will continue to become one of the largest health care problems this country has ever faced.

Stanford is a graduate philosophy student



New dog, old tricks: Clinton takes economic plan from past

The seizure and transformation of the whole budget deficit debate, alchemized into a massive new social spending agenda, will stand in history as representative of Clinton's political acumen. What was once an argument for cutting spending — the deficit — now serves as a battering ram for "investments" — spending redefined. This obfuscation is the great triumph of the Clinton Presidency; for, like grifters, presidents are famed for their most subtle frauds.

A whole armada of myths from the 1980s serves to justify Clinton's agenda. First and foremost is the pop notion that the rich got richer and the poor got poorer during the 80s, and now, by God, they will have to pay for it.



MATT DICKERSON
Columnist

The typical method of presenting income statistics sorts out five income classes from lowest to highest by percentage share of after-tax income. In 1977, the lowest fifth and the top one percent's share of after-tax income was 6 percent and 7 percent respectively. In 1989, the lowest fifth's share dropped to 4 percent and the top one percent's share increased to 12 percent. So the rich got richer, the poor got poorer, QED. Right? Wrong.

This method misleads because the analysis tracks income classes, not people or their families. When studies track the families in each income class, a much different picture emerges because families move up and down various income classes quite frequently.

Isabel Sawhill and Mark Condon of the Urban Institute — hardly a den of dittoheads — reported last year that between 1977 and 1986, "the poor (here defined as those in the bottom quintile at the beginning of each decade) grew much richer, by 72 to 77 percent. The rich (defined as those in the top quintile at the beginning of the decade) grew a little richer, by 5-6 percent." Sawhill and Condon go on to write that, "these

figures will not surprise the experts. Any significant mobility should lead to the same pattern. . . . This pattern, however, may surprise the general public, which has been led to believe that the poor were literally getting poorer over the last decade or two, and that the incomes of the rich were skyrocketing. This is simply not true."

Another popular myth goes by "tax fairness," by which we are to understand that the filthy rich got tax breaks and everyone else had to bear the tax burden during the 80s. This confuses tax rates with tax revenue, or by analogy, prices with total revenue.

Certainly, top marginal tax rates were cut during the eighties. But this shifted a greater share of the total tax burden onto the rich.

In 1980, the top 50, 25, 5 and 1 percent of income earners paid income taxes of 92.9, 73, 36.8 and 19 percent respectively. In 1990, those same income earner's shares increased to 94.4, 77.4, 44.1 and 25.6 percent respectively.

It is ridiculous to claim the top 1 percent are not "paying their fair share" when they pay over one quarter of all federal income taxes.

Cutting marginal tax rates to increase total taxes is not absurd, as John Maynard Keynes — easily the most influential economist this century and an inspiration to many liberals — explains that not cutting taxes is like: "Nor should the argument seem strange that taxation may be so high as to defeat its object, and that, given a sufficient time to gather the fruits, a reduction of taxation will run a better chance than an increase of balancing the budget."

Clinton's tax hike hearkens back to failed Reagan-Bush policies: In 1982, 84, 87 and 90, taxes were raised to "balance the budget," only to fail again and again. Not once was a spending cut tried.

Economic Nobel laureate Friedrich von Hayek argued that high tax rates on the rich serve primarily as pretexts for higher tax rates on middle class taxpayers than they would otherwise tolerate.

The Clinton plan, a smorgasbord of tax increases and social spending increases, is a vacuum without this tactic. In the name of 'cutting the deficit,' 'tax fairness' and 'growing the economy,' the master juggler's sleight of hand ob-

scures multi-billion dollar spending increases projected for every year of the plan.

Clinton, an anointed practitioner of realpolitik, will go down in history a great statesman, no doubt, by pacifying the domestic enemy: the taxpaying voter.

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