

EDITORIAL

VOTE FOR EDUCATION

When the state legislature convenes in January, higher education will be competing for very limited funds, and Texas A&M needs a representative who is committed to expanding access to college and keeping costs down for students.

Because of his proven record as a forceful advocate for higher education, *The Battalion* recommends voters in the March 12 Republican primary cast their votes in the state representative contest for Fred Brown.

Brown is seeking a third two-year term, and if, as political observers expect, Republicans gain a majority in the Texas House, Brown will become the chair person of the higher education committee.

The Texas Grant, which Brown co-sponsored in 2001, provided \$200 million for low-income Texas students to attend college, and Brown said he would work to continue the program. Although the state is facing a \$5 billion budget shortfall, Brown understands increased spending on higher education is an investment that will give Texas the skilled workforce it needs to be economically competitive.

Also, Brown's conservative approach to government will ensure the state scrubs the budget and stretches every dollar so the cost of education is not passed on to students. Both Texas A&M and the University of Texas are proposing substantial student fee hikes to the tune of \$1,000 per year.

Brown has floated a proposal that would require students at top-tier universities to take 30 credit hours (including summer terms) a year. The additional tuition revenue would allow universities to meet their spending needs without raising student fees. Brown also will work to secure passage and funding for a pilot program at Texas A&M that would lower tuition for summer school and take advantage of under-utilized facilities, such as classrooms and professors.

With the looming budget crunch, Texas A&M needs Brown's proven leadership and innovative approach to ensure the state devotes resources necessary to improve higher education without passing the bill to students.

THE BATTALION

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MAIL CALL

Jensen poisons student minds

In response to Jessica Watkin's March 5 article:

As a student at the University of Texas School of Law, I have had the (dis)pleasure of being bombarded with professor Robert Jensen's socialist and anti-American ramblings in the Austin community. However, it saddens me to see that his rhetoric is poisoning the minds of students in College Station as well.

I think students at A&M should seriously question the credibility of a speaker who was publicly called a fool by his own University president last Fall. Jensen equates the American military response with terrorism, and says that the solution to this all is to discard our "plush" middle class lifestyles. How a professor at a prominent university could hold such a baseless view is beyond me.

America a terrorist country? America is not the country enslaving its women. America is not the country holding public executions in soccer stadiums. America is not the country sys-

tematically committing genocide against minorities.

On the contrary, America is the country providing food and medical care to millions of civilians in Afghanistan and other countries throughout the world.

America is the country conducting a just military action with minimal loss of life against terrorists who happily murdered thousands of innocent American lives without so much as blinking an eye.

To equate these actions by the United States with the actions of Al-Qaida terrorists is not only irresponsible, it is ludicrous.

Moreover, seeking pain and discarding pleasure is some sort of neo-communist philosophy that in reality makes no sense and solves nothing.

Jensen is a prime example of why universities should implement post-tenure review. Doing so would rid universities of individuals like Jensen who purport to be full-time professors, but who are in fact full-time radical activists who indoctrinate their students with biased and irrational information.

Jonathan M. Apgar
Classes of 1999 and 2001

LEGALIZE MURDER?

Repeal assassination laws Maintain executive order



MATTHEW MADDOX

Perhaps not since Hitler or Cold War Castro have there been foreign leaders who were such thorns in the side of America as there are today. Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden lay claim to that dishonor through their rhetoric and actions as terrorist leaders. These men simply will not go away, and must be dealt with soon. The United States has been fighting with one hand tied behind its back and must not hesitate to remove the bonds that render it ineffective. The long-standing executive order that forbids American assassinations must be lifted to combat today's terrorist threats.

The most recent limitation on America's ability to assassinate was Executive Order 12333 by President Reagan. It proclaimed that, "No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination." Presidents Carter and Ford proclaimed similar directives during their terms. While that is all fine and dandy, there is nothing permanent about an executive order. Essentially, they are presidential decrees that can be removed, changed or temporarily suspended by the current president. The Constitution delegates to the president the ability to defend the nation in the face of an attack, and an assassination could do exactly that.

Allowing for assassinations undoubtedly would save American lives. Bloody wars fought against regimes could be sidestepped with a single strike rather than the loss of soldiers. This could be likened to the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in World War II. To invade Japan would have meant millions of Japanese and American deaths. Assassinations, like the atomic bomb, are the ugliest side of war. However, their value lies in what they can prevent, not in their destruction. Recent reports place the annual cost of the war on terrorism at \$30 billion. Had the ban on assassinations not been in place, Osama bin Laden probably would not be alive today, and the World Trade Center might still be standing.

Terrorists and the states that support them target Americans of all political stature, from statesmen to janitors. Intelligence procured by the FBI and the CIA shows that Saddam Hussein almost succeeded in assassinating President George Bush in 1993. Hussein also attempted to assassinate an Iraqi Prime Minister, assassinated most of his family and has tested chemical weapons on his own people. In Iran, a clerical oligarchy rules the country with an iron fist and has had a leading role in exporting terrorism through arranged assassinations abroad. The United States cannot afford to withhold assassination against those who already employ it against themselves.

Lifting the ban on assassinations could prevent future conflicts by cutting off the head of the proverbial snake. War may not dislodge or eliminate charismatic leaders causing later problems, and the procedure for extradition is difficult and dangerous. If the radical leadership of Iraq were eliminated, the production



BRIENNE PORTER

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the government has dealt with the idea of being pro-active in the war on terrorism instead of being reactive. While many Americans agree that making pre-emptive strikes against terrorists would save many lives, others wonder how far being pro-active can be taken.

The government is debating repealing the executive order on political assassinations for dealing with leaders of terrorist organizations and countries that sponsor these organizations. Is it possible to balance the idea of protecting the nation from these people and not becoming terrorists ourselves? No, it is not possible to legalize assassinations without becoming a country that has state-sponsored terrorism.

In 1976, after years of U.S. intelligence agencies' assassinations of political leaders, President Ford issued an executive order ending these assassinations. While there have been no assassinations, there have been many military strikes that seem to be a cover for attempted assassinations. While many argue that these military strikes have caused the deaths of innocent people, they fail to recognize the Catch-22 of the situa-

tion. While America has the obligation to protect its citizens, it cannot become another country that sponsors terrorism.

Not only does this create a problem there is also the idea of the moral basis for these attacks. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., voiced the thoughts of many on the Senate floor on Oct. 31, 2001.

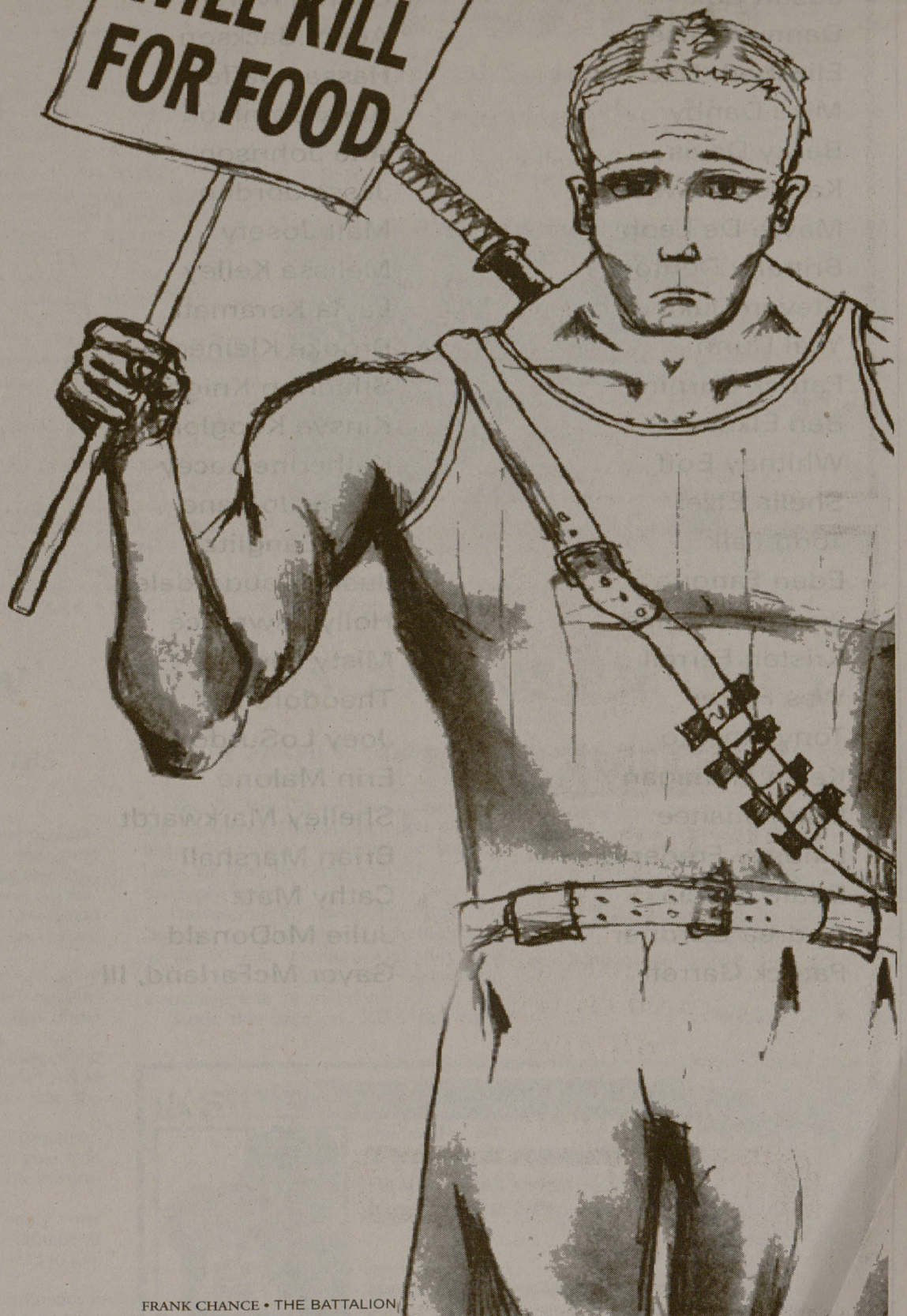
"A policy of preemptive assassinations would be morally repugnant, a violation of international law. It is also ineffective, because it creates martyrs whose deaths become a terrorist's rallying cry for revenge," Leahy said.

America is a country steeped in the ideas of justice and morality. The idea of assassinations of political leaders is contrary to the ideas of justice and morality.

As a country, America cannot argue that it is protecting its citizens by murdering people without a trial. To follow the American ideals, it is appropriate to arrest terrorists and let the American legal system decide their fate. Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, in an article in *The Record of Bergen, N.J.*, said, "It is, in fact, our laws that define us as a people and give legitimacy to our acts as a nation."

Brienne Porter is a senior political science major.

WILL KILL FOR FOOD



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