

## Slouch By Jim Earle

### OPTION I. You Decide to Wait:

1. Depress the Flashbutton - "Gig'em Aggies."
2. Get Distinctive Dial Tone.
3. Dial 5.
4. You will receive a recording of a distance call is now in memory. Your call is free.")
5. Hang up.
6. When an outgoing call will ring.
7. You will receive a second call is now being dialed.
8. You will hear the distinctive tone when a circuit is not busy.
9. Your call is completed.



### OPTION II. You Decide

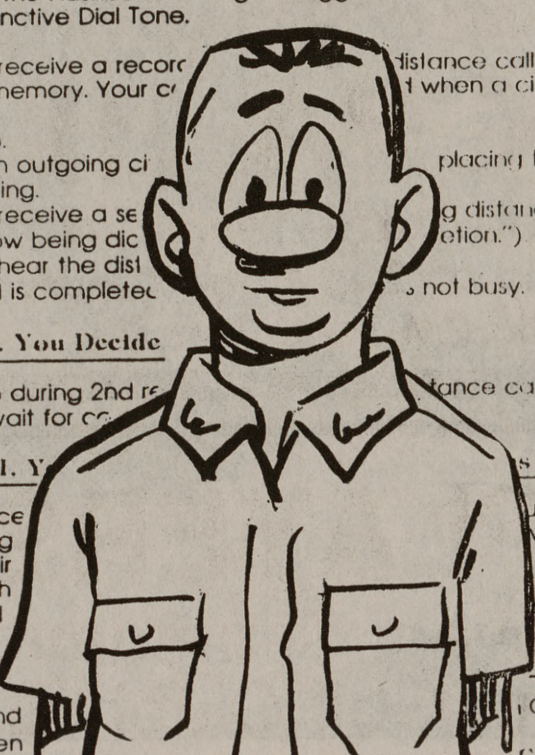
1. Hang up during 2nd recording. Please wait for call to be dialed.

### OPTION III. You Decide

1. Keep recording.
2. Your long distance call is now being dialed.
3. You will hear the distinctive tone when a circuit is not busy.
4. Your call is completed.

### For STS (T)

1. Dial 8 and 2. Dial seven number.



"We may have to write more letters until we figure this new system out."

EARLE 9-2-81

## Block grants mean money and power

By JERELYN EDDINGS  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan's proposals to merge dozens of federal programs into block grants have been dissected and debated everywhere from the halls of Congress to the gambling center of the Northeast.

Reagan wants them. The nation's governors say they need them. Congress has enacted some of them. But many congressmen and federal officials shiver at the thought of them.

It's an old argument. States say they should have the right to control programs that provide education and certain other services for their citizens. After all, they argue, who understands the peculiar needs of the people better than the public officials closest to them?

The federal government's position for the past half century has been that it has a basic responsibility to all Americans; that it should guarantee access to fundamentals like an education, sound health or basic nutrition — no matter what state they live in.

Actually, the argument can be broken down to even simpler terms — who decides how to spend certain tax dollars. And this year, with Reagan setting the tone, the debate has focused not so much on whether states should be given more control, but how much control they should get.

The National Governors' Association held their meeting in Atlanta City, N.J., a city of blackjack, roulette and slot machines.

It was an appropriate spot for the governors, who discussed the gamble they took when they agreed to go along with Reagan's budget cuts in exchange for more flexibility to run various programs.

Generally, they decided it wasn't a good deal. They got the cuts — much deeper than they hoped — but didn't get all the flexibility.

Pure block grants would have terminated individual programs in their present form and given states a few large chunks of money to carry out the purposes of those programs as they see fit. The separate programs could be continued exactly as they are, modified, or even obliterated — which some people in Washington fear.

That concern caused Congress to give Reagan a modified version of his proposed block grants.

Congress eliminated many of the regulations and restrictions that accompany health, education and social service programs. They merged into block grants of sorts some of these "categorical" programs — programs for which the federal government dictated through pages of regulations exactly how the money would be spent.

In their new form, many of the programs still carry a limited amount of federal restrictions. In some cases, specific amounts of money are set aside within the block grants to make sure the states don't discontinue some programs.

And several federal programs Reagan wanted put into block grants will retain their present form next year, with all the strings attached.

The governors hadn't bargained for this arrangement and they were not bubbling with joy.

They called categorical grants "narrow and inefficient" and said they could easily absorb part of the funding reduction if only they could cut out the red tape.

The governors said the new block grants "still contain unnecessary federal strings and mandates," but added, "they are an important first step toward increased efficiency and restoration of proper state-federal balance of power."

And that's what this debate is all about — money and power.

It is, indeed, an old argument. But President Reagan's agreement with governors that states should have more control has given the argument new life this year.

## Reagan's principles face test on prison aid program request

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration is being tugged in opposite directions on the question of federal-state relations. No sooner had the President renewed his pledge to seek further shifts from narrow categorical programs to broad, flexible block grants than the Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime came in with a recommendation for a new categorical aid program — this one for the construction of prisons.

The way in which the White House handles this recommendation will tell a lot about how serious Ronald Reagan really is about his commitment to transferring authority to the states and localities.

My bet is that he will do what his predecessors have done. He will rise above principle in order to accomplish his own, politically attractive goals.

As everyone knows, Reagan has been as stout in his criticism of the arrogance of the all-seeing, all-knowing, all-controlling federal government as anyone in American public life. He has vowed to dismantle the federal bureaucracy and transfer decision-making power to officials closer to the people. At times, he has even suggested that he will turn back revenue-raising power from the federal government to the states and their subdivisions.

When uttered in the safe rhetoric of generalities, all of this is guaranteed to win applause. But now, for the first time in his presidency, Reagan is face-to-face with a

serious test of his own avowed principles.

Crime is an issue that ranks close to inflation in importance to the voters. For more than a decade, the "war on crime" has been a staple of conservative campaign speeches.

Thus, it was both philosophically consistent and politically smart for the Reagan administration to appoint a showcase commission on crime and to greet its recommendations with applause.

A difficulty arises, however, because there is relatively little the federal government can do that directly affects the kind of crime that people worry about — street muggings and house burglaries. After all the decades of federal "usurpation" that conservatives complain of, police protection is still regarded as a local function.

But since it is politically unacceptable to say the the federal government is a bystander on the crime problem — even if that happens to be true — the Reagan commission did what dozens of its predecessors appointed by liberal Presidents have done with the issues of their day. It recommended a new federal-aid program.

It said the feds should distribute \$2 billion to the states over the next four years for prison construction, and require each state to put up a 25 percent matching contribution — \$500 million in all.

The rationale is impeccable. Prison populations are soaring far beyond the capacity of our jails. Riots and abuse of fellow-prisoners make judges and juries reluctant to impose long sentences on those con-

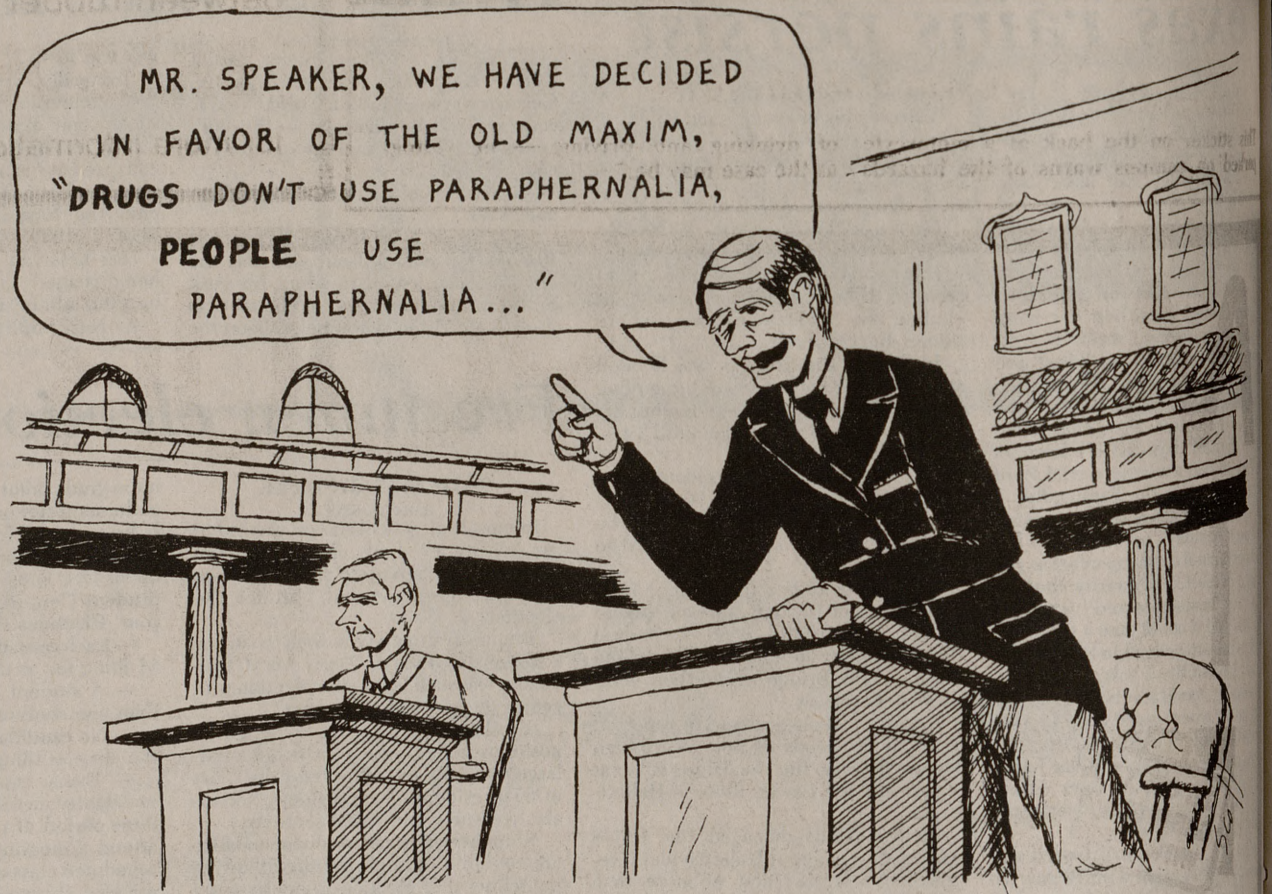
victed of crimes. The states are financially strapped. The problem is national in scope because criminals do not respect state boundaries in choosing where to stage the next hold-up or assault.

But the truth is that the Federal-aid prison-construction program contravenes every principle of federalism Reagan talked about from his first speech for Goldwater to his most recent address at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

It is a new categorical grant, imposing federal priority on the states. It encroaches on state funds. It spends deficit federal dollars in some states with healthy budgets and surplus. It defies the logic that says that state and local officials are the best judges of the needs of their own constituencies.

But judging from the welcome presidential assistant Ed Meese and the Justice Department have given the task force recommendations, none of these problems will prevail over the political desirability of sponsoring an anti-crime program in Reagan's name on it.

Still, it remains a test of his principles. His first round with Congress, Reagan was able to move \$2.3 billion of federal aid from categorical grants to block grants. If he now backs out by sponsoring a new \$2 billion categorical grant program, he puts himself in the same league as Jimmy Carter. He came to Washington pledged to "simplify" the federal government and ended up adding two dubious new Cabinet-level departments.



It's your turn

## Editorial cartoon draws criticism

Editor:

As an employee of the Texas A&M University System, I was appalled by your use of such a crude, offensive cartoon (Aug. 27) in The Battalion. It is just this kind of simple-minded knee-jerk immaturity that continues to demonstrate you are incapable of responsible journalism. I suggest you have your cartoonist take a few lessons from Dr. Earle as McCullar is short on "class" as well as drawing ability. Dr. Vandiver deserves

an apology from the paper — and you particularly.

Jim Raatz  
Commercial Artist  
Texas Engineering Experiment Station

### More criticism

Editor:

Perhaps the reason Jane Brust considers the appointment of Dr. Frank Vandiver to the Presidency of Texas A&M as "anticonformist" (in her August 27, 1981 column) is the

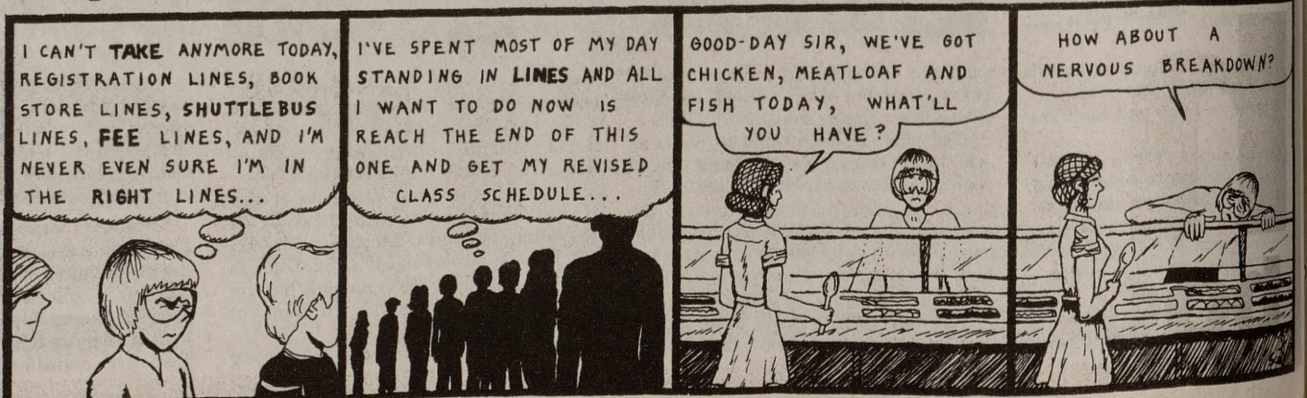
fulminating attitude of the Bryan-College Station Eagle, which chose to exercise its fabled journalistic brilliance by creating "climax" on August 24, detracting fully from the dignity that the Board of Regents' formal announcement deserved.

As for the vicious McCullar cartoon of the uninformed, by the uninformed and for the uninformed shall not perish, it does reflect graphically the predicament recently of The Battalion to enter the arena unarmad.

Robert S. B...  
1203 Munson...

By Scott McCullar

### Warped



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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.  
Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

### LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.  
Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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