

Opinion

A cow most sacred

Shouting his battle cry that no cow is more sacred than creating no new taxes, Texas House Speaker Gib Lewis brought his ever-cutting budget axe down on the Permanent University Fund and the Permanent School Fund — the lifeblood of education in Texas. While Lewis' slash-now, think-later approach to financial matters may temporarily solve deficit woes, it could cause future problems that outweigh monetary shortages — educational shortages.

Lewis is urging that the House Appropriations Committee take a total of \$1.1 billion profit from the two funds' securities transactions of the past five years and channel it into funds for other state programs.

But the purpose of the funds is to create a money-generating investment as a source of revenue for Texas A&M, the University of Texas and public schools. By depleting these funds, Lewis is advocating a threat to education over increasing taxes. In his determination that there should be no sacred cows when the budget hacking begins, Lewis has overlooked the greatest sacred cow of all — his stubborn opposition to the inevitable tax hike.

More dangerous than the actual loss to Texas education is the precedent the measure sets. The capital in the permanent funds was designed to be untouchable. Texas cannot afford to dip into these vital holdings any time it is faced with a financial crisis. Without money to preserve the quality of Texas education, future budgetary havoc can only increase.

Lewis claims that opponents of the plan are "so paranoid they don't want anything to happen." We are not opposed to action, but taking a hefty slice out of education funding merely to avoid a sales tax increase is not a rational solution.

The Lewis plan, when coupled with the committee's recommendation to cut \$220 million from 1987 spending for universities, poses a serious threat to the financial stability of Texas education.

Texas has been striving for greater quality in education. Progress has been made, but much remains to be done. Cutting funding now only can impair educational integrity later.

Lewis should realize that fighting a tax increase at the expense of education is not worth it. The Permanent University Fund and the Permanent School Fund were established to preserve this vital financing — that's why they're called *permanent* funds.

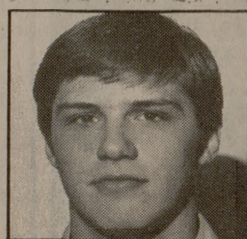
No one relishes the idea of a tax hike, but the future of quality education is worth paying for.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Liberals not only violators of free speech on campus

Les Csorba III, executive director of Accuracy in Academia, in the Aug. 9 *Human Events* claims that radical liberals have overrun college campuses and are suppressing speakers' right to free speech.



Loren Steffy

Csorba quotes Dr. Sidney Hook of the Hoover Institution, who says that there is no free speech on many campuses for anyone who expresses views contrary to the "militant minority." He also refers to Secretary of Education William J. Bennett's warning that "Instead of promoting tolerance, freedom of inquiry and the acquisition of knowledge, campus radicals nowadays tend to see the university as a kind of fortress at war with society...."

These statements are not the startling revelation Csorba makes them out to be. Nor are such actions limited to militant minorities.

Texas A&M proves a good example in refuting the AIA director's assertion. In Spring semester 1985, *Battalion* photographer Tony Casper was physically assisted by cadets in leaving the Quad for taking pictures of the Bloody Cross exercises.

Earlier in the same semester, Students Working Against Morons in Power (previously Students Working Against Many Problems) threatened to sit on the Memorial Student Center grass. Thousands of dedicated Aggies prevented these "radical leftists" from committing such an atrocity, but in the rally that followed, SWAMP essentially was prevented from voicing its opinions. When SWAMP members had the mike, the "audience" was hissing and hollering and generally keeping the noise level above 120 decibels. Hearing what was being said was impossible.

The only break in the perpetual droning was when Rep. Joe Barton took the stand. But Barton, the epitome of knee-jerk Reaganism, only expressed

the views of the crowd, condemning SWAMP for its attempted actions. The resulting roar of approval only served to drown out SWAMP's attempted rebuttal.

Regardless of political views, these scenarios are not something A&M should be proud of, just as Jeane Kirkpatrick and Caspar Weinberger being harassed at Berkeley and Harvard are not something those schools should brag about. If Northwestern University supports professors who rush the stage and dump blood on Contra leaders who have been asked to speak, then it deserves all the condemnation Bennett, Hook and Csorba can muster.

But Csorba's attempt to typecast politically active students on campus as leftist radicals "who erect illegal shanties, threaten college administrators, organize pledges of resistance, punch campus security officers, harass patriotic student journals and, most notably, shout down conservative guest lecturers" is an insult to the integrity of all college students — liberal or conservative.

To say that the primary college "politicos" are leftist is simply inaccurate. Numerous studies have found, as would be expected in Reagan's America, that a majority of right-wing conservatives dominate campus political activity. To be conservative is not to be inactive. A&M, known for its ultra-conservatism, had the highest voter turnout of any college in the nation during the last presidential election. Hardly the proper behavior for a campus that, by Csorba's definition, should be a wasteland of political concern.

But suppression of free speech is not a liberal or conservative atrocity — it is an act of immature intolerance. It's Csorba's job to blame liberals for all the wrongdoings on college campuses, but these incidents can't be limited to one political affiliation. Nor can it be said the suppressors are all "militant" and radical. Certainly this wasn't the case at A&M.

Instead the problem stems from people who can't stand to hear speakers

voice contrary opinions on matters they feel strongly about. College should be a place for inquiry and acquisition of knowledge, but this can't happen if only liberal or only conservative speakers are allowed to air their opinions.

It takes a balanced dichotomy of opinions for true acquisition of knowledge to occur. To maintain this delicate balance, listeners must realize that everyone has the same right to free speech — be they liberal, conservative or apolitical.

Csorba has hit on an important problem on college campuses, but he can pin this one just on liberals. If speech is going to be free on campuses, students and professors are going to have to develop greater tolerance for opposing viewpoints.

Loren Steffy is a senior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor for *The Battalion*.

Saving public schools one student at a time

We interrupt the national search to establish what, if anything, Associate Justice William Rehnquist said to citizens approaching a polling booth in Arizona 10 years before he became a member of the Supreme Court 15 years ago to report an enterprise that gives one of those Fourth of July tingles that occasionally remind us that: a) the United States is a pretty special place; b) it could be a lot better.



William F. Buckley Jr.

The story begins with a highly successful New York businessman, Gene Lang, who was asked to address the eighth grade graduating ceremonies in the high school he had attended. He prepared one of those petty speeches, what one might call Horatio Alger Boilerplate, about how glorious was the future of the young American graduating from junior high. But on the way to the ceremony he surveyed the figures. Of 100 children who enrolled in New York City high schools, 25 will graduate. And only one-half of them will qualify to go to a city university.

Lang threw away his speech and said to the students: Here are the statistics you face. Now if you bring yourself to overcome the odds, I will pay your college tuition. He is now financing the college tuition of the overwhelming majority.

Peter Flanigan, a cosmopolitan banker associated with the firm of Dillon, Read and sometime assistant to former President Nixon, pondered the story and came upon an extraordinary anomaly. Whereas 75 percent of public-school children don't graduate, 96 percent of those that attend the Catholic-run schools do graduate, and three-quarters of them go on to college. Is this accomplished by expelling all backward or unruly children? It turns out that the parochial schools expel a smaller percentage of students than the public schools send to correctional institutes.

Well then, surely there is a line 10 miles long of applicants for admission to parochial schools? Negative. There are hundreds of empty seats: The parents — or rather the parent in most cases — don't have the money.

An organization called Student/Sponsor Partnership was born. Individual

New Yorkers are invited to sponsor a student selected by the administrators of Cardinal Hayes High School (for boys), or Cathedral High School (for girls). Requirements: The selected student must not be a genius (they can take care of themselves) or an imbecile (waste of any school's time). They must come from a single-parent home, the parent on welfare. The sponsor contracts a) to put up \$1,500 per year for the student; b) to make himself (or herself) accessible to encourage the student and to keep an eye on the student's progress; and c) to consult periodically with a special counselor whom the schools bring in to monitor the student's progress, get him out of bed if he is playing hookey, advise him on his work and make provisions for extra work as required.

Now the ethnic mix in the schools we speak of is indistinguishable as between the Catholic schools and the high schools. Roughly, it is a 55 percent black, 45 percent Hispanic. One-third of the students attending the two Catholic high schools are non-Catholic. The program, which will be tax-deductible, is non-sectarian. It is a brand-new idea, but already the Student/Sponsor organization has lined up sponsors for 20 boys and 12 girls beginning next September. The program is being administered by Cynthia Haueter, 333 E. 68th St., Apt. 5E, New York, N.Y. 10021. Some sponsors who cannot afford the \$1,500 put up a part of it, the balance coming from someone else, the question of who will act as the personal sponsor left open for solomonic dispensation.

So there we are. There is the ugly residue left in one's thinking on this matter, namely why on earth are the high schools doing such a lousy job, given the identical raw material? But the invitation is not to unfair comparison, rather to the satisfaction of knowing how, by relatively small exertions, individual lives can be changed. The difference between graduating from high school and going on to college, and dropping out at age 15 or 16, can mean the difference between a lifetime spoiled and a lifetime consummated. Flanigan recalls that many affluent New Yorkers drive right by the Bronx every day. They have it within their power to pull an individual human being away from the ghetto.

And the problems of New York are, in this respect, not different from the problems of other great municipal centers in America.

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WHICH CONSTITUTES THE GREATEST THREAT TO "INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY"?