



## Unpopular politicians are hard to come by

Every now and again it occurs to me that Sen. Phil Gramm might be just enough of an ideologue to prove useful: he's such a pushy little squirrel he's made himself thoroughly unpopular with his colleagues. But a politician willing to be unpopular is hard to come by and a man ready to throw a spanner into the works occasionally can be worth his weight in awful legislation killed.

The trouble with Gramm is that so far he's always been on the wrong side. And now he's on the right side for the wrong reason, and what's even more confusing is that he's on the wrong side of his argument.

Gramm is trying to stop the S&L bailout bill, and the immediate consequence of that move is to further stretch out the process and to cost everybody more money — \$20 million a day. It would be worth the cost if Gramm had a good alternative bill, and a chance to pass it.

But nooooo, Gramm is supporting the original, truly dishonest bill proposed by the Bush administration. In other words, he's trying to stop a bad bill and replace it with a worse one, instead of a better one. The whole mess looks like a bad joke about Aggie economics.

At issue is the \$50 billion (ha-ha) the bill sets aside to close or merge about 600 failing thrifts. *Numero uno*, it's going to cost a hell of a lot more than \$50 billion to bail out that many S&Ls: the government has already spent \$30 billion on the 200 thrifts it has bailed out so far, *Numero Two-o*, because of his "read my lips, no new taxes" pledge.

Bush refused back taxes to pay for even the \$50 billion, and instead decided to borrow the money over 30 years, which will cost \$306 billion with interest.

You tell me why that's smart. Bush's plan was to set up a special agency to borrow the money so the sum wouldn't show up in the deficit: like, he'd take us \$306 billion further into hock and tell us it wasn't even happening. That's worse than dumb, that's criminally irresponsible. The Senate voted for the Bush plan by a very narrow margin, but the House refused to go along.

They bought the 30-year payback plan, but said it had to show up on the books, not be put "off-budget." That way, the government borrows the money in its own name at lower rates, instead of this new quasi-governmental agency, and the taxpayers are saved as much as \$40 billion interest over the 30 years.

But the House didn't want to take the hickey for raising taxes either, so instead of raising the \$50 billion now, they decided to end-run the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction law by exempting the S&Ls money from Gramm-Rudman.



Molly Ivins  
Syndicated Columnist

Then the junior senator from Texas took a fit and is now holding up whole works. Theoretically, Gramm standing for fiscal responsibility working against the effort to exempt S&L bailout from the provisions Gramm-Rudman. Except even Gramm votes to exempt stuff from Gramm-Rudman — he voted to exempt a \$4.1 billion expenditure just Thursday.

Gramm says he's trying to stop the plosion of the deficit — the only way do that would be to raise taxes to pay the damn S&L bailout — and that's what he wants to do.

As a practical matter, the Bush would make the deficit even worse.

To give you an idea of how bad the whole bailout plan is, according to *Dallas Times Herald*, it is "a piece of legislation that is regarded by bankers as one of the most solid and responsible bills ever to emerge from Congress." Does that give you an idea how bad we're getting the shaft? The bankers are real happy.

I propose again that we solve the mess with the people's favorite tax: let's don't tax you, let's don't tax me, let's tax that fellow behind the tree. The fellow behind the tree, friends, is the one who caused this mess to begin with: let's tax the financial industry to pay for bailing out the financial industry.

Meantime, Dallas continues, as always, to astonish and delight its friends. One of the odd bits of information surfaced during the recent flap on whether a lesbian who is openly lesbian can become a police officer (not in Dallas is the answer) was DPD's policy on this regard.

The Police Department personnel policy manual states that applicants "must not have engaged in deviant sexual contact with 'an animal or fowl' age 17."

Now, wait a minute. What is this?

Why are animal lovers given a one-year break over gays? Who wrote the policy and why did they write it that way? Who would think to ask such a question in the first place? How many sheep fondlers do we have on DPD? Friends, do you want someone who is in love with a parakeet at 17 on your police force? A teen-age bunny lover?

Write your city councilperson concerning this grave new threat to public safety.

## One giant editor's note

This summer has been a hot one, especially for *The Battalion's* opinion page.

Save the whales. Save the trees. Nuke the trees. Add a crossword puzzle to the page. Go to Iran and run ads for terrorists. I've heard it all this summer. We were bombarded with so many flag-burning letters that I had to abort (excuse me, I mean burn) some of them. But that's OK, these are the controversial issues and opposing viewpoints that make people turn to page two.

Now that's my opinion. Not the opinion of the entire *Battalion* staff, not the opinion of the editorial board and certainly not the opinion of the entire University. It's mine. All mine and, according to the first amendment, I'm entitled to such opinions. And some of these belong on the page, after all, isn't opinion the stuff page two is made of?

I am writing this column to clear up some things for the readers of page two. In the past couple of weeks I've received several letters to the editor that have said basically the same things, namely that the "narrow-minded, emotional rather than reasonable" views of *The Battalion* staff and its editorial board are reflected in the columns and editorial cartoons we run on the page. One letter clearly suggested that the entire editorial board is in favor of abortion on demand.



Juliette Rizzo  
Opinion Page Editor

This is a matter of opinion. Let me make it clear that I, as an editor, do not let my opinions appear on the page unless I express them in a column under my byline; nor do I let my personal views affect the daily decision of what to print. And as for the joint opinions of the editorial board, which is composed of eight editors, including myself, they are designated on the page as such and are not usually voiced daily, only when a situation arises about which we feel strongly enough to take a stance.

Now the rest of the page is kind of a random sampling of opinions from readers whose interest to respond is sparked by something on or off the page. Guest columns are just that — they're written by someone other than a staff member. And Mail Call, our letters column, is, as Paul LaRocque of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* once said, the readers' soapbox. To dispel the myth that we sometimes make up letters for

the page, let me say that letters to the editor are written by the readers for the readers. And to fill Mail Call, what some say is the most read section of the page, (and the paper for that matter), we need all the letters we can get. So don't be afraid to write one. We don't bite, and heck, we at *The Battalion* don't even answer them back.

To sum it all up, page two is a forum for individual expression about national, international and local events. It's kind of a combination of every page of *The Battalion* including the sports page. (Hey, we even ran a Pete Rose column once.) To keep the page interesting, we need your input.

Now I realize that the opinions on the page do not necessarily agree with those of others. But, expressing my one opinion paves the way for others to do the same in the form of letters to the editor and guest columns. So, if you agree with the opinions on the page, tell us, and if you get hot under the collar from something on the page rather than the summer heat, don't keep your opinions to yourself, let them be heard. EXPRESS YOURSELF! A common misconception is that a newspaper's editorial page is used as a medium of expression for the opinion page editor only. Wrong. Page two is not mine, it's yours.

Juliette Rizzo is a junior journalism major and opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.

## Revenge can be sweet

A reader named Louise Penberthy of Atlanta, who described herself as a Northerner, was concerned about a recent column in which it was my intent to get even with some dimwit in Chicago who circulated a bogus "Application to Live in North Carolina." This putrid piece went the rounds among the employees of Sears in Chicago after it was rumored the company might be moving to Charlotte.

The application dealt in numerous Southern stereotypes and in my offended and wounded state, I decided to do the only sensible thing — take revenge.

So I wrote a column dealing in Northern stereotypes (Northern women don't shave their legs, etc.), and reader Penberthy responded: "As a Northerner, I was appalled to read the nasty stereotypes put forth by Northerners concerning Southerners."

### Lewis Grizzard

Syndicated Columnist

"However, there was no reason for you to turn around and do what you decried so loudly and at such length."

Au contraire — which is French for an American word involving the horned bovine.

In the first place, taking revenge is the best way I know of to get even, and getting even is one of life's greatest pleasures.

After I wrote the aforementioned column, my spirits lifted and I celebrated by burning a copy of *The New York Times*, which the Supreme Court recently ruled was OK as long as you weren't pregnant and thinking about having an abortion.

Southerners have been called rednecks, hicks, hillbillies, and worse. We've been humiliated in movies that depict us as one great collection of drawing, drooling, dregs of the earth.

And I'm tired of all that, so no matter what Louise Penberthy has to say, I wasn't about to miss out on the opportunity to demonstrate two can play the game of peering-down-a-nose.

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### The Battalion

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