

## Court confirmation process too political

It is unfortunate that the confirmation process for the U.S. Supreme Court has degenerated into a political battle reminiscent of a presidential campaign.

Two weeks ago, President Bush nominated David Souter to replace Justice William Brennan on the Supreme Court and immediately the mud digging and slinging began.

The Senate, under its constitutional responsibility, should only advise the president and support or reject his nomination of a Supreme Court justice. It should not press Souter with questions dealing with any specific issue that might come before the Court. To do so only politicizes the process.

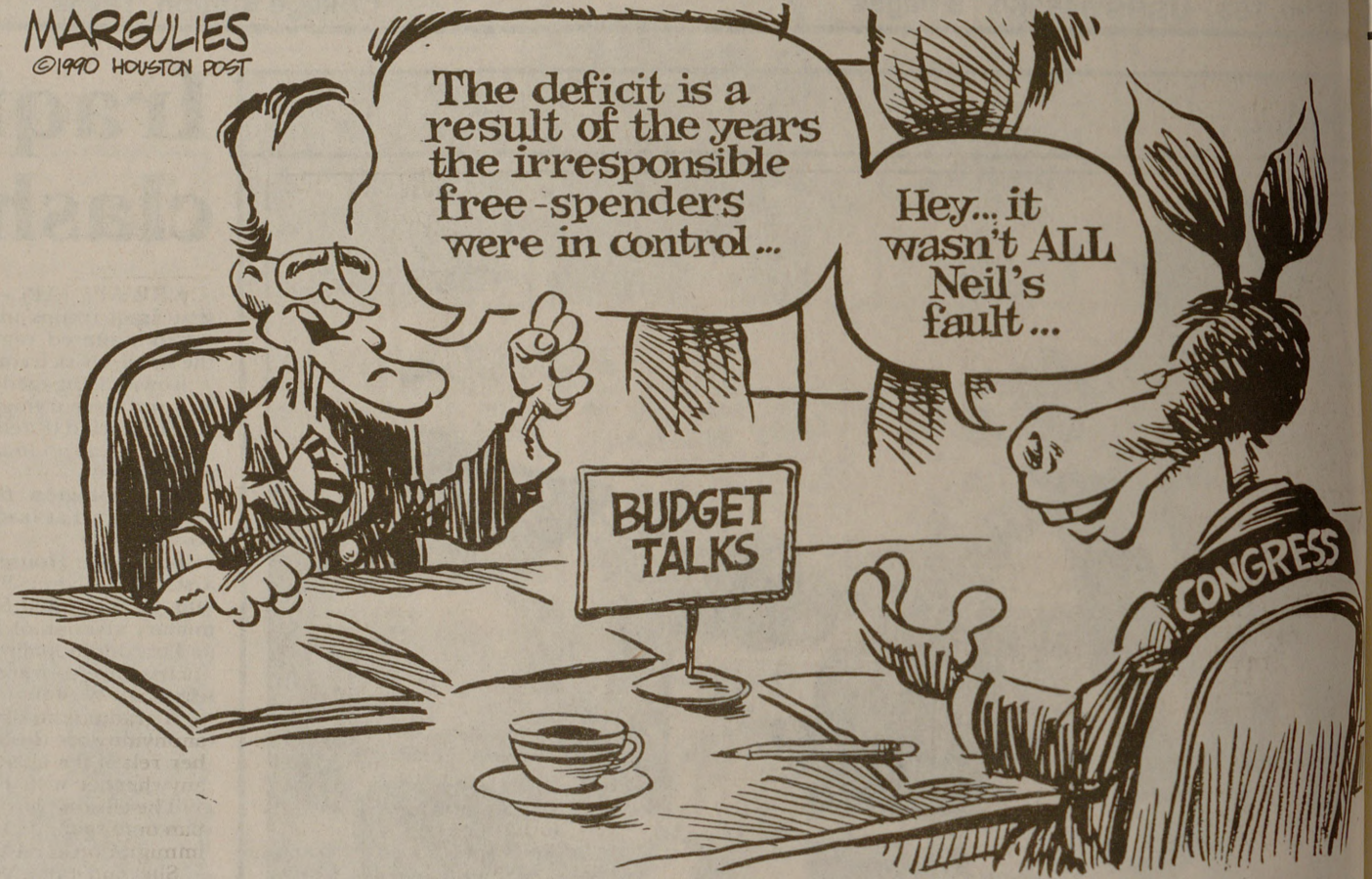
Our forefathers intended to give justices lifetime appointments so they would not be subject to short-term pressures from administration to administration.

Groups have tried to pressure Souter to disclose his stance on key issues such as abortion. This pressure needs to be stopped.

Some Senators are calling Souter a "blank slate" because of his absence of written opinions and judicial writings. However, Souter should be considered a "clean slate" by the Senate. The Court might gain a judge that will perform as a justice should — as an impartial mediator of fact and law.

The Battalion Editorial Board

MARGULIES  
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## Foul 'art' shouldn't be funded

The arts have made the news again. Last Summer the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was taken to task for subsidizing the photograph of a cross in a jar of urine. This summer, people are wondering why the NEA hasn't subsidized 2 Live Crew.

The only time our federal government will spend our tax dollars on a religious object is when a cross is dropped in a jar of urine, or when a tortured Virgin Mary is contorted into a tie rack.

Last summer's controversy had nothing to do with free speech. It had everything to do with tax-subsidized speech.

Serrano's exhibit of "Piss Christ" and other trash was subsidized with \$15,000 from the NEA. Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic pictures were going to be subsidized with \$30,000 in taxpayer monies before the NEA wisely cancelled the exhibit.

No amendment was considered nor was any bill drafted that proposed censorship. The debate was whether you and I should pay for the exhibition of a portrait of Robert Mapplethorpe with the handle of a bullwhip up his rear end.

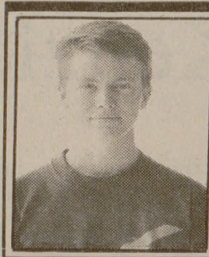
If Mapplethorpe or Serrano or their supporters find a child pornographer or satanic cult to fund their garbage, more power to them.

The bigger issue is whether the United States should be subsidizing art at all. I don't remember Article I of the U.S. Constitution saying "and 5 percent of the budget will build art galleries for exhibition of Michelangelo's portraits," (not that the "artists" in question are Michelangelos).

In 1988 the NEA gave 4,600 grants totaling \$156.3 million. Did the grant of \$5,000 to a jazz drummer in Brooklyn "to support intensive one-on-one study with percussionist Warren Smith" provide for the general welfare? Not mine.

Since the NEA was established in 1964, the endowment has handed out \$2.3 billion. A lot of victuals could be put on a poor man's plate for \$2.3 billion.

If there is a good argument against any taxpayer-subsidized art, then surely the least we can do is put a couple of minor strings on the art we do subsidize. After all, the federal government puts strings on everything else.



Jon Beeler  
Columnist

A few simple restrictions should be placed on the NEA. These restrictions should prohibit grants for artwork that depicts sadomasochism, homoeroticism, child pornography or graphic sex acts, or that endorses racism or sexism, or reviles religious symbols.

If you and I are going to pay for art, then the least we can do is insure that the art is not obscene. If you like obscene art, then pay Serrano to defile a crucifix; don't ask me for money.

It's amazing that burning a cross will land you in jail, but urinating on it can earn you \$15,000 from your fellow Americans.

The NEA should stop insulting taxpayers. If the private sector will pay for obscenity (assuming it does not violate criminal statutes), fine! However, Americans have a right not to be offended, mocked and denigrated with their own tax dollars.

When Sen. Jesse Helms fought the good fight last summer, he said on the Senate floor: "Artists have a right, it is said, to express their feelings as they wish; only a philistine would suggest otherwise. Fair enough, but no artist has a preemptive claim on the tax dollars of the American people." He evidently had no care for censorship.

To the "artists" that defile the crucifix or urinate in another's mouth for a quick snapshot, we need to say "no" to more taxpayer money. They should be advised "to go out and test the magic of the marketplace," as Ronald Reagan often said.

In case someone comes screaming to you about all the attempted "censorship" of the arts within the last year, and compares the NEA controversy to the rumored 2 Live Crew censorship, you would do well to arm yourself with a catalog of Mapplethorpe's portraits and a clear understanding of free speech versus subsidized speech.

Jon Beeler is a junior nuclear engineering major.

## High level of cholesterol in blood can be disheartening

Columnist offers advice on how to avoid heart disease

According to Dr. Tom Lister, staff physician at the A.P. Beutel Health Center at Texas A&M, one-third of the female students who request birth control pills have blood cholesterol in the low 200s. Lister says that, "Two hundred is already too high. These women are too young to have these numbers, and do not pay enough attention to what they eat."

Cholesterol is now a common word, but what is it? Cholesterol is a waxy substance that is found in your body and in certain foods. The body normally produces 65 to 70 percent of its own cholesterol, and gets the rest from food.

Why is cholesterol important? Cholesterol is used to make sex hormones, to form vitamin D, to help transmit nerve impulses, to form bile acids and to keep cell membranes healthy.

Can cholesterol be a problem? Yes, even though cholesterol plays an important role in one's body, cholesterol can lead to coronary heart disease when blood cholesterol levels are too high.

What is blood cholesterol? Blood cholesterol is the cholesterol that circulates in the blood stream. Three types of particles named lipoproteins carry cholesterol:

- Very low density lipoprotein (VLDL): This lipoprotein primarily carries triglycerides and normally does not contribute significantly to blood cholesterol levels.

- Low density lipoprotein (LDL): It is also called "bad cholesterol." LDL is responsible for depositing cholesterol in the tissues, and is the major contributor to the build-up of atherosclerotic plaque.

- High density lipoprotein (HDL): It is also called "good cholesterol." HDL carries excess cholesterol away from the cells to be eliminated from the body. People with high levels of HDL may be at lower risk for heart disease.

Erika Gonzalez-Lima  
Health Columnist

When are blood cholesterol levels too high?

The National Cholesterol Education Program guidelines are (Cholesterol — mg/dl):

- Desirable: Total: less than 200; LDL: less than 130.
- Borderline: Total: 200 to 239; LDL: 130 to 159.
- High risk: Total: 240 and above; LDL: 160 and above.

Are there other risk factors for heart disease?

Risk factors include being male, having a family history of coronary heart disease, smoking, having high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, or vascular disease and being more than 30 percent overweight. Borderline cholesterol levels are treated as high risk levels when two or more of the above risk factors are present. An HDL cholesterol level below 35 mg/dl is also considered a risk factor for heart disease.

Can cholesterol levels be improved?

Yes. You can help lower your cholesterol levels by making appropriate dietary and life style changes. Begin a "heart-healthy" diet and wait one to three months before expecting to see any changes in your blood cholesterol levels.

What life style changes may affect cholesterol levels?

Weight loss can reduce LDL and total cholesterol levels. Aerobic exercise for a minimum of 20 minutes three times per week may increase HDL cholesterol.

What is the "heart-healthy" diet?

To lower your LDL and total cholesterol levels, reduce total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol from your diet. To increase your HDL levels, eat more fish and soluble fiber.

A dietitian can counsel you on these guidelines:

- (1) Achieve and maintain ideal bodyweight through exercise.
- (2) Reduce total fat intake to less than 30 percent of total calories.
- (3) Make wise "fat" choices:
  - Saturated fat: Consume less than 10 percent of total calories ("hard" fat — for example, meat fat, butter, cream, cheese, as well as coconut oil, palm oil, palm kernel oil, cocoa butter, and other hardened or saturated fats like stick margarine).
  - Increase intake of monounsaturated fats (olive, peanut and canola oils).
  - Select some polyunsaturated fats (safflower, sunflower, corn, soybean and cottonseed oil).
- (4) Reduce cholesterol intake below 300 mgs per day.
- (5) Increase soluble fiber intake (oat bran, guar gum, pectin, beans and legumes, some fruits and vegetables).

What if these changes do not work?

If after three months your blood cholesterol levels do not become "desirable," it is time you see a registered dietitian. After six months of strict dietary changes, your physician may consider using drug therapy if your blood cholesterol levels have not changed.

Why not start now with a drug treatment for cholesterol?

It is always better to reduce blood cholesterol levels with diet and lifestyle changes. Drugs used to lower blood cholesterol may have undesirable side effects. Your physician will consider these possible side effects before selecting an appropriate drug treatment for you.

Have a question on a health issue? Write to the Health Columnist, Dr. Erika Gonzalez-Lima, Student Health Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77845-1264. Letters will be answered anonymously through this column in The Battalion. If an individual reply is expected, please include your name, address and telephone number.

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