

Souter opposition too late to make court more liberal

The Supreme Court convened yesterday for the start of the new judicial session, and with David Souter's nomination just about assured, this Court could prove to be the one Ronald Reagan was dreaming of when he took office in 1981.

Historians have noted that a president's most enduring legacy is often his appointments to the Supreme Court. This is obvious when one realizes justices that Presidents Kennedy and Johnson appointed are still serving.

Realizing this, most feminist groups along with minority interest groups and labor leaders have been denouncing Bush since his nomination of Souter for the vacated position on the Supreme Court. Although not very revealing in his views, Souter is thought to be conservative as far as judicial ideology is concerned.

Vowing never again to vote Republican, these aforementioned groups are doing everything in their power to read Souter's mind in an attempt to find out how he feels on such controversial issues as affirmative action, separation of church and state, and abortion.

Fearing that Souter could be the justice that gives the present conservatives on the Court a vote they have been denied, the groups opposed to Souter are blaming Bush for seeking to draw the line on civil liberties that have seen great progress since the mid-60s.

If they haven't already realized, their opposition to Souter is too little too late. These "johnny-come-latelies" to the liberal cause are doing nothing for their respective groups but making them look like a bunch of juveniles who expect the courts to protect their causes.

Where was this outpouring of concern when Reagan was running for President in 1980? Were they so short-sighted as to think that Reagan's conservative ideals wouldn't carry over to his judicial appointments? For them to think that Reagan would hold the line on taxes and at the same time appoint liberal jurists demonstrates their political simplicity.

This weak attempt at organized opposition to

Patrick Nolan

Columnist

Souter is delaying the inevitable — what's done is done. If these groups are concerned with the direction the Supreme Court has been heading during the 1980s, they should channel their effort to electing national leaders that agree with their judicial philosophy.

These groups in opposition to Souter seem to be surprised that the liberals on the Court are becoming rarer. Yet Souter is the latest conservative appointed to the Court, not the first. And he by himself can't change the direction of the Court; these worried groups should have been a bit more vocal in their opposition to Antonin Scalia, Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy.

Where was the feminist opposition to O'Connor when her nomination proceedings were being conducted? Nowhere. The feminists were so brimming with glee at the token woman appointment that they suddenly forgot about ideology. The effects of this strategic blunder remains to be seen, but O'Connor, along with the rest of her comrades, has the potential to invalidate feminist advances that we have seen in the last 20 years.

Apparently, the interest groups concerned with the direction of the Court were so intoxicated with Reagan's feel-good elixirs concerning other issues, they forgot about the president's judicial appointment power.

In all fairness, however, there has always been a noble minority in opposition to Reagan's social agenda from the beginning, and these people should be applauded for their foresight.

But for those folks who have just realized the beating that civil liberties could take under a conservative Court, your feeble opposition is akin to shutting the barn door after the horses are out.

Patrick Nolan is a senior political science major.

PTTS, get new uniforms

Imagine this: You've been mistaken for a drug importer who worked for a Mafia boss in 1977. It's time for that importer to be rubbed out, and the assassin is after you.

He finds you in the library and comes after you, chasing you out of the building and pursuing you across campus. You run into a parking lot and see someone who can help you: he's wearing a blue uniform shirt, dark pants and a badge.

"Ha!" you say to your would-be assassin. "You can't get me now! I've found a police officer!"

"That's no police officer, that's just one of those people who give parking tickets," says the assassin as he puts the gun to your head.

OK, so that's a pretty ridiculous scenario, but it illustrates my point. Those Parking, Transit and Traffic employees who give parking tickets are wearing the uniforms of security officers, and they don't have any business wearing them.

A few semesters ago, the University Police Department gave up the chore of giving parking tickets and decided to stick with real criminal activity. Now they are connected with ticketing car owners for only moving violations. The duty of ticketing parking violators was given to PTTS.

But the PTTS has taken its authority a bit too far. It clothed its employees who give the tickets with the uniforms and badges of security officers.

It could be argued, I suppose,



Ellen Hobbs

Opinion Page Editor

that the uniforms give those employees recognizable authority — we see the uniform, and we know that those people are authorized by the powers that be to give parking tickets.

And those people do have power and authority that we must recognize. If we get a ticket from one of them, we may be blocked from registration or graduation, and we are forced to take care of our ticket.

But frankly, they don't deserve to wear the uniform and badge of a security officer.

Uniforms carry a lot of meaning. Just ask anybody in the Corps of Cadets. They wear uniforms and decorations that show the training they've had and the achievements they've made. Postal employees wear postal uniforms because they have taken tests and have been trained to perform the duties of a postal worker. Chefs wear chefs' hats because they've gone to school and have been trained as chefs.

Police and security officers are trained to protect and serve, and they are employed to perform those duties. That's why they wear the recognized police uniform. So why are PTTS

employees walking around campus looking like the cast of "Hill Street Blues?"

This isn't only a breach of uniform etiquette, but it confuses people who don't realize that PTTS gives the parking tickets. Complaints, questions and contempt that should be directed toward PTTS end up being sent to UPD instead because the people who give parking tickets are wearing police uniforms.

The ensuing confusion is inconvenient for the UPD and for the people who get tickets. ask anyone who has walked all the way over to one side of campus to the UPD office only to be told they have to walk all the way over to the other side of campus to the PTTS office to questions about their tickets.

Why not just avoid the problem and quit suiting the PTTS ticketers up like police officers? Almost any other generic uniform would do — with a patch and I.D. card, maybe, instead of a badge.

A different uniform would still give the ticketers the authority they need to do the jobs and allow the UPD officers (they're the ones in the black police uniforms) to retain the respect and authority they deserve.

The PTTS people don't need to dress up and play like they're police officers to give parking tickets. Don't give them more credit than they deserve.

Ellen Hobbs is a senior journalism major.

Mail Call

Bikers, stay off the sidewalks

EDITOR:

This is in response to the letter of Jesse Spears in the September 24 issue of The Battalion. I'm glad to see that at least one biker knows the traffic rules concerning bike riding.

Like Jesse said, "biker riders must obey all traffic rules." This does not only apply to riding on the streets but NOT riding on the sidewalks. Since when have cyclists had the right of way on the sidewalk? There are many times as a pedestrian I have been asked to move out of the way on a sidewalk to allow a cyclist to get by. If I'm not mistaken the people allowed on sidewalks are pedestrians and wheelchairs. It has been my understanding that if a cyclist used the sidewalk he/she would have to walk their bike, unless cycling on that pathway is allowed by traffic rules (this is very rare).

Of course this brings up the whole subject of what cyclists should and shouldn't do. Cyclists should; ride on the roadway, stop at stop signs (drivers cannot interpret your actions if you don't), maintain their position on the road (do not swerve out without signaling or looking). Cyclists should NOT; use the sidewalk when the traffic gets thick, nor jump onto the sidewalk to avoid stopping, nor ride off the sidewalk onto the road (because you shouldn't be on the sidewalk anyway).

Maybe you think I'm a snob because I have a car and I think I own the road. However, if I cannot interpret a cyclist's actions that is how I will come across. I cannot read a cyclist's mind.

I'm sorry that you have to get off the seat of the bike and remove your feet from the pedals to come to a stop. Unless you do I cannot assume you have any intelligence and you are also illiterate. Coasting through a STOP sign is against the law for both cars and bikes. I won't give you the room you need on the road if you do not act like a responsible cyclist; and I will cut you off if you run a stop sign; and I will honk if you disobey the law; and I will continue on my immediate path if I cannot understand (not guess) what your actions are. I truly hope you inconsiderate cyclists don't get injured for your improper actions. I'm not that vindictive, but I hope you can see my point of view.

Harriet Shannon, '88
Graduate Student

Low-level waste is a high-level risk

EDITOR:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) may soon deregulate a large share of the nation's so-called "low-level" radioactive waste as "Below Regulatory Concern" (BRC).

"Low-level" waste is actually highly radioactive, and is not a "low-level" risk to public health. BRC materials are disposed into ordinary landfills and sewers, or by incineration, which could allow radioactivity to escape into the soil, groundwater, air and the food chain.

The NRC is also considering an expanded version of BRC known as "Exempt from Regulatory Control" (ERC). ERC radioactive material would be recycled into materials used by the public. This would mean higher levels of radioactivity in consumer products, the release of contaminated land and buildings for unrestricted public use, and the disposal of radioactive material into the water.

What's behind this full-moon lunacy? Quite simply, the government does not know what to do with "low-level" radioactive waste, and for a very good reason: there is nothing that can be done with it. Instead of admitting this fact, the government has tried to "linguistically detoxify" the waste, in an unprecedented reversal of current policy.

In July, 1990, Congressman George Miller said, "The BRC is fatally flawed in many respects ... It would be virtually impossible for the NRC to keep track of BRC wastes once they are deregulated ... there is a growing scientific consensus that low-level radiation is far more hazardous than previously thought ... Under this policy, the NRC has the ability to override any state or local laws and ordinances that prohibit the disposal of BRC wastes in ordinary landfills."

Congressman Joe Barton has publicly stated his support for this policy. The SSC would generate 65,000 cubic feet per year of "low-level" waste. The Comanche Peak nuclear power plant, which would provide electricity to the SSC, will also generate radioactive waste during its operation, and considerably more when it is eventually decommissioned.

Only one of the three existing "low-level" radioactive

waste sites in the U.S. will be open by 1992. Joe Barton needs the BRC exemption in order for his SSC to go through.

If you do not want the College Station and Bryan landfills, and other ordinary landfills like it around the country to become glow-in-the-dark dumps, let your elected officials know today.

Michael Worsham
graduate student

Batt folks are good Ags

EDITOR:

I wish to thank you. The Battalion is my main source of news. The Battalion keeps me informed over local and world events and provides a stress reliever through the comics. As classes have progressed, I haven't found time to grab a seat in the TV lounge anymore, and reading the Battalion is my way of keeping up with current events.

I would also in particular like to thank Chris Vaughn, a member of the Battalion staff. I am taking a Mass Media class, and for my term paper, I am covering the Texas economy. I have been keeping newspaper clippings of any articles pertaining to my topic. Within the last week, we were assigned to contact groups associated with our topic for a lab project. Since I was not lucky enough to know of a club like Aggie Economists, I felt discouraged. I thumbed through my clippings and noticed that one was from the Battalion. Chris was noted as the writer, so I called him. He wasn't home, but I left a message for him to return my call. Not only did he return my call, but he saved my lab project by giving me some possible sources. I love that Aggie Spirit!

Cristy Ecton '94

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

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Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson

