

High taxes will not create more revenue for U.S.

What is one to think about all this talk about budget deficits? The good news is that the sorry excuse for a budget plan did not pass through Congress. This means that the federal government will shut down. If we're lucky, the IRS and all the regulatory agencies will close for good.

After this budget plan was announced, Bush got on the television and did his little dog-and-pony show on why we, the American people, should like this bill. He asked the voters to contact their representatives and express their views on the bill. They did all right, and nobody likes it.

The plan called for higher taxes on gas, cigarettes and alcohol. The spending cuts would come from the military, farm subsidies and Medicare. The Democrats did not like it because the taxes imposed are regressive, and they weren't able to soak the rich with higher tax rates. The Republicans, on the other hand, were opposed to the tax



Andrew Matthews

Columnist

increases, and were mad that the White House dropped its demands for a lower capital gains tax rate.

This whole budget fiasco provides the perfect backdrop to the ideological battle between the big-government and libertarian forces. The former are led by the traditional left-wing Democrats and moderate Republicans. These people somehow believe that the absolute goal of government is to ensure that it has enough money to pay for all its ever expanding services.

If government starts spending too

much then the taxpayers MUST give up more of their hard-earned money. It never occurs to these politicians that most people are just living within their means. The government must have more money, to hell with the costs!

The irony of this belief is that in today's economy, raising tax rates does not raise more revenue. Tax writers erroneously assume the individuals do not change their behavior when confronted with higher taxes.

Put a tax on mixed drinks at bars, and consumers will drink more beer at home. Put higher taxes on corporations and they will hire more tax accountants. Raise property taxes and families move to the suburbs. A more harmful result is that onerous taxes on income tend to discourage individuals from engaging in income-producing activities.

This results in an inevitable spiral of taxation and economic decline. Governments raise tax rates, thus

resulting in lower economic activity and lower tax revenues. Governments then find themselves with even less revenue, so they raise tax rates again, resulting in even lower tax revenues.

The timing of these proposed tax increases is horrendous. The economy seems to be heading for lower growth, perhaps even a recession. What the economy needs now are lower capital gains rates indexed to inflation, a return of the investment tax credit, and other pro-growth measures to stimulate the economy.

Macroeconomists generally agree on the desirability of a balanced budget, but widespread disagreement exists on the effects of deficits on the economy. Do they promote growth through more spending, or do they halt growth through higher interest rates? Who knows? We do know that higher taxes will hurt. Without a doubt a balanced budget should be a goal a good

government, but the health of the economy is more important.

The joke about this budget plan that without an overhaul in the way the budget will never be balanced. Politicians will always shy away from making necessary cuts in spending, and need to bring home the pork will outweigh the feeling of responsibility to cut the deficit.

What is needed is either a balanced budget amendment, a line-item veto the President, or at least allow a mechanism such as Gramm-Rudman to make the automatic spending cuts. These measures would provide a spending and at the same time allow Congressmen to escape from accountability for the cuts. Only these measures and a reaffirmation of the no-new-taxes pledge by the president will the federal government solve the budget and economic problems.

Andrew Matthews is a senior economics major.

Battle against AIDS virus with accurate information

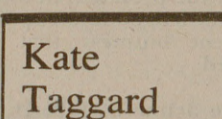
Bruce Hudgins' letter of Sept. 28 certainly stirred up a lot of indignation on this campus. While I found his views on homosexuality profoundly disturbing and personally offensive, I will not attempt to refute them. He's entitled to his opinion.

It was Mr. Hudgins' misconceptions about AIDS that really upset me. He quite liberally used the phrase "statistics will show" when he obviously had never seen or studied any. Mr. Hudgins is misinformed about AIDS and its causes, but instead of learning about it he has decided to blame someone else and stay ignorant. No such luck, Mr. Hudgins. I've decided to educate you and anyone else who'd like to come along for the ride.

Statistics will show that AIDS is not just a male homosexual disease found outside the "old conservative South". Center for Disease Control (CDC) statistics on HIV/AIDS show that Texas is fourth in the nation in the number of reported AIDS cases. We are behind New York, California, and New Jersey. Florida. Another fine, conservative, southern state ranks fifth. And the numbers are rising dramatically. In 1989, Texas had 2,418 cases of AIDS. In August 1990 that number had risen to 3,168, or about 18 cases per 100,000 people. Twenty nine of these were cases of pediatric AIDS (defined as children under 13). So AIDS isn't an urban problem, or a gay problem, it's society's problem. That means you and me.

People are dying from this disease right here in our own backyard. In Brazos County we have had 34 cases of AIDS, four of which are pediatric cases, resulting in 30 deaths.

As far as the contention that AIDS spread to the heterosexual community by those nasty drug users prostituting themselves to dirty homosexuals, statistics will show that this just isn't the whole story, or anywhere close to the truth. AIDS spread to the heterosexual community through the use of IV drugs (24 percent of all AIDS cases), unprotected sex with an IV drug user (55 percent of all heterosexual contact cases), and through persons born in a "Pattern II" country (18 percent of all heterosexual contact cases). A Pattern II country is defined as one in central, eastern, and southern Africa and some Caribbean countries. We should note that these countries are given this special category because transmission of the HIV virus through homosexuality



Kate Taggard

Reader's Opinion

and IV drug use is rare to nonexistent. Sorry, Mr. Hudgins, but statistics show contact with bisexual males account for only 6 percent of heterosexual AIDS cases.

In the United States, male homosexual contact accounts for 54 percent of all AIDS cases. While this is still a slight majority, it should be noted that it is down from 58 percent just last year. And remember, in the early 1980s male homosexuals made up almost 100 percent of all cases. Why are the numbers falling in this part of the society yet rising in others?

EDUCATION AND PREVENTION. These are the keys to stop the spread of AIDS. I decided not to refute Mr. Hudgins' views on morality, homosexuality, or Christianity because I didn't want to waste precious space arguing. Morality, or the lack thereof, isn't the issue here. The issue is people.

The CSC and AIDS Foundations across the country are switching their educational emphasis to young adults and IV drug users, the people most at risk today for AIDS. Students here on this campus, especially the women between the ages of 20-25, are among those most at risk. In comparison to the rest of society, college campuses have much higher rates of promiscuity and we just don't protect ourselves.

I'm willing to bet that almost every student at Texas A&M could tell me what the Surgeon General said about the transmission of the HIV virus. NEXT TO ABSTINENCE, THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST THE HIV VIRUS IS THE PROPER USE OF A LATEX CONDOM. But how many of us practice "safe sex" each and every time? Or at all? How many of you just know you'd die of embarrassment asking your partner to use a condom? Well, you just might. You can not claim ignorance anymore. You're armed with the facts. Now it's up to you.

For more information on HIV/AIDS or where to be tested, call the AIDS Helpline at 690-AIDS.

The AIDS Foundation of Brazos Valley always welcomes new volunteers! To become involved call us! 690-AIDS.

Kate Taggard is a senior English major and volunteer with the AIDS Foundation of Brazos Valley.

Public schools not all bad

EDITOR:

I just re-read Andrew Matthew's diatribe against public schools, and I have to admit, he does make one thing clear: there IS someone in Texas as intellectually brilliant as Clayton Williams. How can any thinking person come out FOR public education?! Never mind that all of us happen to be attending a public school ourselves.

The arguments he used are perfectly elegant. He starts off by calling our system SOCIALIST. That'll stir up most God-fearing Americans, I guess! He points out that because public schools aren't well integrated, we should send all kids to private schools and abandon all pretense! It's too bad that poorer kids and minorities won't make it in our rich white kids' junior country clubs, but I'm sure they will be happier in the inner city slums. No use in pretending that they will somehow be INCLUDED in our little experiment.

I especially admire how Mr. Matthews convincingly argues that making school teachers go free-market will improve quality AND lower salaries. Since so few parents these days have time to keep an eye on their school system or attend school board meetings, we ought to find SOME nice, easy solution.

Joseph Kachmar
graduate student

Homosexuality isn't a sickness

EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Mr. Bruce G. Hudgins who states that "...homosexuality is a sickness that infects the weak-minded and morally corrupt and therefore they cannot be treated as equals to sound-minded people."

Oh, poor, poor Mr. Bruce G. Hudgins, how do I even begin to respond to your naive, "old, conservative, southern" remarks? How does one explain to a Nazi that a Jew is a human who deserves nothing less than basic human rights? How does one halt a Ku Klux Klan member from torturing and murdering an innocent black? How does one change a mind which has been trained to hate?

Dear Mr. Hudgins I write this letter knowing that it is a rather hopeless effort. I write this letter to you out of respect for a young homosexual boy who recently left College Station and moved to Amarillo, where in a few short weeks he was murdered for being gay. I write this letter out of respect for all of my gay friends who suffer the torment of prejudice from the simple minded.

Mr. Hudgins, what you and Joe Barton have failed to understand is that with all of your irrational suspicion and hatred, you cannot stop homosexuality. There are many theories about why homosexuality exists. It is almost certainly a response to stress in society and possibly nature's way of controlling overpopulation.

You should make no mistake, Mr. Hudgins, homosexuality exists and will continue to do so simply because it is a part of nature that is present in some form in all of us. It amuses me that you think you could possibly ban such a thing.

I think the reason I found your letter so disturbing was because of your obvious anger. "If you are homosexual move to San Francisco or please get back in the closet. Just LEAVE TEXAS THE HELL ALONE!" Prejudice is a very dangerous thing. I seriously suggest you consider just why it

Mail Call

is you are so angry. What is it you are afraid of? Are you worried that homosexuality is infectious?

You stated that the Bible is "very straightforward" concerning the issue. While I am not so foolish as to believe the Bible contains the absolute answer to all of our questions, I do suggest you read I Corinthians Chapter 13.

"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I left away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abide faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Don't you see Bruce, an issue such as this couldn't possibly be "straightforward". Homosexuality is far too complex a question to simply declare it unconditionally wrong. It would only be childish. We must struggle together with wisdom and love to see through this dark glass.

Louise Abigail Reading '91

Nobody likes homosexuals

EDITOR:

I am responding to all of the letters written on Oct. 3. You are all sick. Robinson, maybe you should look at your letter once more.

As to Buschhorn's letter, our constitution only provides for a republican form of government distinguishable from monarchy but not a direct democracy ("State and Local Government", p.40, sixth ed.). Just open your eyes and you will see that the past ten years have been very politically conservative, Democrat or Republican, and the only liberal challenges have lost badly. Dukakis only carrying one state as an example.

True, Hudgins is wrong to say AIDS is a homosexual disease, but if you do your studying you will find a homosexual is still the undisputed first link in the chain. And Jim who cares who spreads the disease the most, that is like setting a fire and blaming the dry grass for killing the animals. Robinson, what is all of the psychological "You are crap? Don't include me or anyone else to your side. You tempt to seduce us to your argument with fancy wordings you FAILED. We are a predominantly anti-gay rightist nation; don't fight it.

And finally back to Buschhorn, why pick on Texas? The whole United States — each individual citizen — is against homosexuals, this has nothing to do with prejudice of religion, or a particular belief. We will all gladly treat homosexuals with the same rights as any other mentally unstable person deserves. Love is a very personal thing, heterosexuals keep it personal and so should you. To quote an old letter, "Stay in the closet."

Timothy Raines '92

Have an opinion? Express it!

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(USPS 045 360)

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The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Newsroom: 845-3313.

Mail subscriptions are \$20 per semester, \$40 per school year and \$50 per full year: 845-2611. Advertising rates furnished on request: 845-2696.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson

