

The Battalion

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"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

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Students react to disabilities act at forum

By CHERYL HELLER
Reporter of THE BATTALION

An open forum to help identify issues with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was held Monday in the Student Services Building.

The forum gave concerned individuals a chance to voice their opinions and discuss the changes that must be made at Texas A&M University in order for it to comply with the ADA.

The ADA, which became effective last January, prohibits discrimination against the disabled in employment and in their access to public places. It applies to colleges, universities and other educational institutions.

The forum began with an introduction by Vice President for Finance and Administration Robert Smith, who explained the purpose for meeting and the changes that must be made at Texas A&M.

"This forum is a visible manifestation of our commitment," Smith said, "and is being held to determine what our priorities are."

Ben Wolf, a visually impaired Texas A&M graduate student who attended the forum, said he believes A&M has a lot to offer in the area of physical access.

"The physical accessibility at Texas A&M is second to none," Wolf said. "Except for some problems with steep wheelchair ramps, narrow doors, and a lack of bicycle regulation enforcement, I feel that A&M is doing a good job in making the facilities accessible for the disabled."

"There is some discrimination in classes as far as the teachers are concerned," he said. "The

professors aren't willing to accommodate students with disabilities because it will inconvenience them."

Tom Strganac, an associate professor in the Department of Aerospace Engineering who is confined to a wheelchair, agrees the problem of discrimination among the faculty needs to be addressed.

"The System doesn't allow the faculty to be very sensitive to students," Strganac said. "It's easy for a faculty member to discourage a student from taking a class because it's more convenient to him."

Strganac agrees with Wolf that there are some architectural problems at A&M that need to be smoothed out, but general accessibility is good.

"There are a few problems, such as bathrooms that aren't easily wheelchair accessible," Strganac said. "Just because there's a handicapped sign on the door doesn't mean that they're easy for us to use."

Lisa Larson, an Evans Library employee who attended the forum, was diagnosed with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome as a direct result of poor working conditions at the library.

"I was diagnosed with this condition about two years ago," Larson said, "and since then little has been done to improve working conditions here."

Experts have visited offices and made recommendations, Larson said, but the University has rejected them because of cost.

"As our campus becomes more automated, more and more people will be disabled on poor work stations," Larson said. "I hope the University realizes this

and that changes can be made before more people are injured."

Others attending the forum commented on the fact that there is no set procedure for fire drills, causing confusion for the disabled who must get out of the building quickly. The creation of a mandatory workshop to teach staff members sensitivity in dealing with disabled students was also mentioned.

Smith has appointed an ADA Steering Committee to identify policy and procedure changes that are needed at Texas A&M in order for the University to be in compliance with the ADA within three years.

The committee is in the process of performing a self-evaluation required by the ADA to focus on the areas of physical facilities, transportation and human resources.

A Disability Access Advisory Committee of disabled and non-disabled faculty, staff and students has also been formed to function as a sound board and as a funnel for questions and comments.

The committee makes recommendations to the ADA Steering Committee regarding the issues that arise.

Joe Sugg, director of the Physical Plant, believes that the information gained in Monday's forum will help the committees decide the changes that need to be made to gain university compliance.

"We'll take this input and use it to help us gain a better understanding in dealing with ADA issues," Sugg said. "The forum will go a long way in directing our limited resources to the areas that need improvement."



RAILEEN TWAMLEY/Special to The Battalion
Jeff Klouda, a computer science major from Kingwood, goes up a ramp outside the Teague Building. Klouda said the Teague Building entrance is one of the worst on campus because the ramp is steep with a narrow corner.

Congress overrides Bush's veto of cable bill

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Congress overrode President Bush's veto Monday and enacted legislation designed to regulate the cable television industry and curb rising rates. It was the first time the House and Senate had thwarted Bush's veto during his presidency.

The House voted 308-114; the Senate 74-25. Both were comfortably over the necessary two-thirds majority.

Bush had successfully vetoed 35 other bills.

"Good for the House, good for the Senate, good for the Republicans who voted to override," Democratic nominee Bill Clinton said on CNN's "Larry King Live."

"This was a bill that was in the interests of the ordinary, average Americans, the kind of people who have been left out of the policies of this administration," said Clinton, who was interviewed in Ocala, Fla., with running mate Sen. Al Gore.

The cable TV bill would require the Federal Communications Commission to set rates for basic cable service in communities where cable companies operate as monopolies. It also is designed to enhance competition from other companies that can provide expanded programming similar to cable.

And in a concession to the broadcast industry, it requires cable companies to negotiate with local broadcasters before carrying their signals.

"The president says competition will not increase with this bill," said Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii. "He is wrong. If we do not pass this bill, there will never be competition to cable."

Republican Sen. John Danforth of Missouri, a coauthor of the bill, cautioned Democrats not to characterize the vote as a weakening of the president.

"I know a lot of weight has gone on the president's perfect record on vetoes," said Danforth. "A lot of presidents have had vetoes overridden and they have been very strong presidents."

AIRBORNE



BILLY MORAN/The Battalion

An AH-1 Cobra helicopter flies over the Rudder Theater Complex Monday as part of a recruiting drive of the Army National Guard. Based in Waco, A Troop, 1/124 Cavalry was the representing unit.

Candidates actions face public scrutiny

Opponents' pasts arise during campaign

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Bill Clinton never seems to foreclose an option while George Bush stakes out unqualified stands that sometimes come back to haunt him.

Clinton's hedged support of the Mexican trade treaty was a classic example of his style: weigh all factors, split the differences and satisfy everyone a little.

"You must look at the other side of the coin," he said.

Bush faces a day of reckoning on what came perilously close to a renewed no-new-taxes pledge earlier this campaign season. Congress is about to send him a bill that contains many of the tax breaks he wants.

"They pack it up with some of the good things the country needs, and then load in some things like higher taxes, and I'm going to have difficulty there," the president said Monday on ABC's "Good Morning America."

Bush has been known to fudge and Clinton has been known to do 180-degree turnarounds. Usually it's the other way around. The rap against Bush is that he flip-flops and the knock against Clinton is that he waffles.

Clinton's positions usually come with qualifiers and conditions. To supporters, that's shading and nuance; to detractors, it's slick or evasive.

Republicans have had a field day with Clinton's ever-changing accounts of how and why he avoided military service during the Vietnam War.

His position on the Persian Gulf War has also provided fodder for the GOP. Clinton says now that he supported the Persian Gulf War.

He said at the time he would have voted with the Senate majority that authorized the war if it were a close vote.

He also said then, "I agree with the arguments of the people in the minority on the resolution."

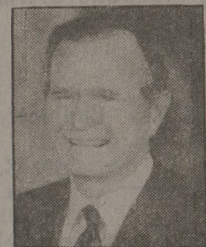
On Sunday, Clinton endorsed the Mexican trade treaty negotiated by Bush.

He also pledged to seek supplemental agreements to protect U.S. jobs and markets.

And while Clinton supports legal abortion, he also told Readers Digest this month that he doesn't oppose a 24-hour waiting period "as long as it is not an undue burden on low-income people who travel long distances in states where abortions are performed only in one or two places."

He supports laws that require young girls to notify their parents or a judge that they're having an abortion.

And while abortions for poor women would be subsidized under his national health-care reform plan, Arkansas has not paid for them during his tenure as governor.



Bush



Clinton

Advance

No September Silver Taps

There will not be a Silver Taps ceremony tonight because no Texas A&M students have died during the month of September, said Sherry Nesbitt, coordinator for Silver Taps.

The last time there was not a ceremony was April of this year. Julian Jelinek, Ross Volunteer, said there will not be an alternative ceremony to take the place of Silver Taps. The reason for Silver Taps is to honor Aggies that have passed away so there is no need for a ceremony this month, he said.