



THE BATTALION

Vol. 93 No. 81 (8 pages)

1893 - A Century of Service to Texas A&M - 1993

Wednesday, January 26, 1994

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Local community surprised by Clinton's moderate views

By Angela Neaves

THE BATTALION

President Bill Clinton's conservative theme in his first State of the Union address Tuesday night surprised many Texas A&M student leaders and faculty members.

Clinton urged Congress to reform the health care and welfare systems. Clinton also voiced strong support for stricter legislation against crime.

Bryan Jones, a professor of political science at A&M, said Clinton gave a tough-minded, conservative speech that appealed to the moderate wing of the Democratic Party.

"Clinton's stress on family values was reminiscent of the Reagan years," Jones said. "This middle of the road stance is bad for Republicans."

Jones did not agree with Clinton's statement that the welfare system "denies our values as a nation."

"The welfare system involves two trains of values," Jones said. "On one hand, we want to offer people the opportunity for maximum individual initiative. On the other hand, we want to help people out when they're in trouble."

Sometimes in helping people we take away that initiative, Jones said.

"Clinton took a conservative stance on the welfare issue because that's where he sees most Americans," Jones said.

Ron Going, a member of the College Democrats and a sophomore philosophy major, said the welfare system is a positive system that has been abused.

"The welfare system was designed to help people who slipped through the cracks," Going said. "Instead of being viewed as a handout, it should be viewed as a way to give people a second chance. It should be there to assist those in need."

Going also praised Clinton's emphasis on family values.

Phil Meuret, president of the College Republicans and a senior geography

major, said Clinton's focus on family values was hypocritical.

"Republicans have long stood for family values," Meuret said. "After making fun of Dan Quayle, the Democrats are focusing on family values because it sounds good. Clinton is pulling a fast one on Americans."

Jones said Clinton's goal for reformation of the health care system is a good one. Insurance companies have long been competing for profits, which led them to cut costs by not insuring people with health problems, Jones said.

"By leveling the playing field and saying all companies must cover everyone with no regard for preexisting conditions and serious illnesses, everyone is competing on the same level," Jones said.

Jones and Going agreed that Clinton's "Three Strikes and You're Out"

program, which would make third time felony offenders ineligible for parole, would be approved by Congress.

"People are fed up with crime and have expressed it to Congress," Going said.

Jones said although the mandatory sentencing policy will probably pass, it needs to be carefully thought out.

"This is a simple idea about a complex problem," Jones said. "The policy doesn't leave much discretion to the judge and jury, and that is what this country is based on. It works against our system."

Meuret said the mandatory sentencing policy reflects Republican values.

"The problem all goes back to family values," Meuret said. "The only way to fight crime is to keep criminals in jail and teach children good family values that will lead them away from crime."

President pushes Congress to pass health-care reform plan, crime bill

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Proclaiming progress on his promises to break gridlock and revive the economy, President Clinton challenged Congress Tuesday night to move together on health care and welfare reform this year. "Our work has just begun," he declared in his first State of the Union address.



Clinton

Upping pressure on Congress to pass the health-care reform plan that is the centerpiece of his domestic agenda, Clinton — who has yet to veto a bill — threatened to veto any measure that does not meet his standard of universal coverage.

"It is inevitable and imperative" that the health-care system be overhauled, Clinton said, calling it an issue on which "the people are way ahead of the politicians."

Clinton voiced strong support for legislation that would put 100,000 more police officers on the beat, send three-time felons to prison for life and ban assault weapons.

"Violent crime and the fear it provokes are crippling our society, limiting personal freedom and fraying the ties that bind us," Clinton said, sounding a theme popular both among both Republicans and Democrats.

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, the president's chief adviser on health care, was seated in the gallery between AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and Jack Smith, the chief executive officer of General Motors.

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Stick your neck out



Tim Moog/THE BATTALION

TAMU Wildlife and Exotic Animal Center's 7-foot tall ostrich recently celebrated its first birthday. The bird is part of the center's developmental studies.

Court's sodomy ruling infuriates gay students

By Angela Neaves

THE BATTALION

Opponents of the Texas sodomy law enjoyed a short-lived victory before the Texas Supreme Court last week dismissed an earlier court's ruling that the law was unconstitutional.

Five individuals challenged the constitutionality of the sodomy law in 1989 saying it violated their rights to privacy and equal rights. A lower court agreed in 1990, saying the sodomy law was unconstitutional because it violated the right to privacy.

But the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision last week, said civil courts do not have jurisdiction to rule this law unconstitutional.

James Mazzullo, an adviser for the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Aggies and associate professor of geology, said the Supreme Court's decision was disappointing to the homosexual community, but it does not have much effect on Texas A&M students.

But when the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Aggies were establishing their organization, the University fought the group's creation citing an endorsement of criminal behavior if the group was permitted on campus.

"Now, fortunately, most universities aren't using that excuse anymore," Mazzullo said.

Jason Payne, who answers telephones for the Gay Line and is a senior computer engineering major, disliked the Supreme Court's reason for dismissing the ruling.

"The case was thrown out because the individuals involved were not charged with violating the statute," Payne said. "The statute has never been enforced, so how will anyone ever rule on constitutionality? How do we get our day in court?"

Although the law does not only apply to homosexuals, Payne said it is used as a reason for prejudice.

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AG supports Arby's ban on smoking

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Texas Attorney General Dan Morales on Tuesday praised the announcement by Arby's Inc. that it will ban cigarette smoking in the restaurants it owns and suggested that other major chains are likely to follow suit.

"The growing evidence of the dangers posed to non-smokers shows that smoking in public places is much more than an annoyance; indeed, it can be a killer," Morales said at a daylong forum on passive smoke in fast-food restaurants.

"It is a terrific thing to see responsible corporate leaders stepping forward doing what is clearly in the best interest of the public," said Morales, among the leaders in the effort by 17 state attorneys general to end smoking in fast-food establishments.

The attorneys general formed a task force after the Environmental Protection Agency issued a report last year saying secondhand smoke kills 45,000 non-smokers annually. They targeted fast-food outlets, saying passive smoke hurts young customers and workers.

Children account for one-

"It is a terrific thing to see responsible corporate leaders stepping forward doing what is clearly in the best interest of the public."

- Dan Morales, attorney general

fourth of the fast-food market and up to 40 percent of the industry's staff is under the age of 18, according to a report issued last year by the attorneys general.

The Arby's decision is one of the broadest anti-smoking steps taken as the fast-food industry grapples to balance health and economic concerns.

Smoking will be banned this summer in the Florida-based chain's 257 corporate restaurants. The policy doesn't affect the 1,991

franchisee-owned outlets, but Arby's is urging franchisees to adopt the smoke-free policy.

Arby's is the first major chain to institute the corporate policy, although thousands of fast-food outlets nationwide already have banned smoking, generally at the franchisee's behest or because of local laws.

Minnesota-based International Dairy Queen Inc. also is urging its 6,000-plus Dairy Queen, Orange Julius and Karmel Korn franchises worldwide to go smoke-free.

Tobacco industry officials denounced the smoke-free policies, saying they're worthless from both health and business perspectives.

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A&M replaces Academic Building windows

Students, faculty opinions differ over appearance

By James Bernsen

THE BATTALION

The wooden windows of Texas A&M's Academic Building are being replaced with aluminum windows this week, and students and faculty have mixed views on the change.

Dan MacGilvray, associate professor of architecture, said replacing the wooden windows with aluminum ones takes away from the building's character.

"I think it's a shame they took them out," he said. "It destroys the historic integrity of the building."

But officials in the Physical Plant defended the changes.

David Godbey, associate director of the Physical Plant for Engineering and Design Services, said the new windows will fit in with other buildings on campus.

But MacGilvray said replacing

the windows in the other buildings was a mistake, and the Physical Plant is repeating that same mistake.

"I don't know anybody (in the college of Architecture) who has come out in favor of them," he said.

Amy Cochran, a senior German major, said she likes the windows.

"I like them because I have a lot of classes in this building, and the old ones looked gross and were starting to rot," she said.

The new windows, around 250 in all, have aluminum frames and feature an in-swinging casement so they can be opened from inside. This will make cleaning the windows easier, which Godbey said is important in a building that is such a focal point on the A&M campus.

Some of the windows that have been replaced still have exposed nails and masonry on the inside, but will be covered by wood trim similar to the old trim, Godbey said.

But MacGilvray said the Physical Plant could have replaced the windows with aluminum windows with the same color and pattern.



Amy Browning/THE BATTALION

Old windows of the Academic Building (right) are being replaced by new and modern ones (left).

"The white ones were very distinctive and could be seen from afar," he said. "They look now like they have black eyes."

The windows were selected by Engineering and Design Services using computer visualization

techniques, which allow different windows to be inserted into a photograph to view the new designs.

Cost and maintenance were ex-

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