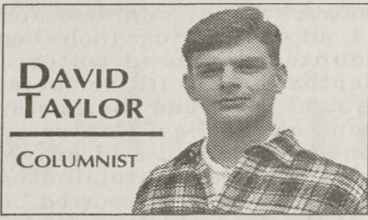


# OPINION

## White House at fault for failed nomination

Dr. Henry Foster should have been the next surgeon general of the United States. For those of you who live in a vacuum — please e-mail me directions if you do — Dr. Foster was not confirmed by the Senate as surgeon general of the United States. Dr. Foster went before the Senate committee and said, gosh, I don't remember doing any abortions. A few days later, when he was reminded, he said, well, maybe a dozen or so... Well, next thing you know, a dozen became 40 ... and then 50 ... and then finally 55. I guess this is what they call "new math." Dr. Foster's nomination was doomed from the get-go, but not because he had performed abortions. Rather, Foster went down because he misled Congress about performing abortions. It didn't have to happen this way. Take a close look at Clinton's cabinet, and it reads like a list of Who's Who in the world of pro-choice. All these people had to be confirmed by Congress. In fact, Dr. Foster's would-be boss at the Department of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, is a strong supporter of abortion on demand. Obviously, the real problem is not Dr. Foster's stance on abortion. For some reason, Congress has this peculiar tendency to become annoyed when it thinks someone is pulling a snow job. Dr. Foster, in the eyes of the Senate, was pulling a snow job.



**DAVID TAYLOR**  
COLUMNIST

This wasn't a partisan problem. Oliver North felt the ire of a misled Congress as much as Lani Guinier and Zoe Baird. The fact of the matter is the president never should have sent a nomination to the Senate without a detailed background check first. This is the whole reason why we have Senate confirmation hearings. It isn't meant to be a rubber stamp, and we would be poorly served if it was. This mess begs a question. Why would Foster lie to the Senate? Henry Foster is an intelligent, widely-respected and civic-minded man who is well-qualified to be surgeon general. Why trash all this with a lie? One guess might be that he was told to lie in a misguided and amateurish attempt to overcome po-

tential controversy. If that was the case, it was a bad plan. Anything that forces scrutiny on an issue as divisive as abortion is guaranteed to become political. Barbara Boxer, the ever-sanctimonious senator from California, declared in an ever-so-sanctimonious voice that Senators should not play politics with the surgeon general nomination. Just a thought: the job description of "politician" includes "politics." On Thursday, President Clinton stated, "Make no mistake about it, this vote was about nothing more than a woman's right to choose." Note to Clinton from Boxer: presidents should not play politics with the surgeon general nomination. The surgeon general is not supposed to be a political position. For example, Dr. C. Everett Koop was the surgeon general for many years under both Presidents Reagan and Bush. The only guarantee anyone had about Koop was that he would say what the research indicated, whether it was popular or not. Dr. Foster was nominated to replace a surgeon general who always would state her opinion, whether any facts existed or not. Is Henry Foster the best possible choice to replace former Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders? Not in

my mind. Throwing gasoline on a fire will only make it burn hotter. At this point, Dr. Foster must feel pretty scorched. Then there's the president. A frustrated congressman from Clinton's own party told CNN last week, "If you don't like the president's policy, just wait a few days and it will change." Dr. Foster, unfortunately, was the recipient of about 14 different "strategies" (that means "idea we came up with at 3 a.m. this morning") all meant to strengthen the chances of his securing confirmation. I know it's radical and pretty unpopular, but ever so often, people — like, say senators — react very well to the truth. This nomination was done in by the politics of Mr. Magoicism — that wonderfully fun-to-watch game where someone accidentally does the right thing and knocks everyone else over at the same time. When the president makes his next nomination for surgeon general, assuming Congress doesn't eliminate the position, Clinton may want to do a little counting first. If that new math doesn't work, he can try fingers and toes.

*David Taylor is a senior management major*

**THE BATTALION**  
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### EDITORIAL

## FOSTER FAILURE

The U.S. Senate should have voted on the surgeon general nominee.

Last Thursday, the U.S. Senate let the American public down. Not that this is anything new, but each time the senators fail to do their jobs, it deserves attention. One duty of the Senate is to vote on the confirmation of the president's nominations for positions such as surgeon general. But the senators just didn't bother to vote on Dr. Henry Foster, Clinton's surgeon general nominee. During Foster's career as a physician, he performed 39 legal abortions. So two senators decided to filibuster the Senate's vote for Foster's confirmation. Cloture, the procedure used to stop the filibuster, fell three votes short and was not achieved, despite the fact that Foster had enough support to be confirmed had the nomination been put to a vote. The blame for this injustice falls squarely on the shoulders of Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., and Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas. The two front-runners for the Republican nomination for president seemed so obsessed with the politics of the 1996 election, they forgot one of their most important current responsibilities. Abortion always will be a controversial issue in American politics. Despite differing views on the morality of abortion, the fact remains that each of the abortions Foster performed was legal. Foster's stance on abortion should not have been the Senate's sole reason for preventing his confirmation. Unfortunately, special interest groups controlled these

confirmation proceedings. The Christian Coalition issued a letter to all senators, stating that a vote of "no" would not suffice, but that the issue must not even go to vote. The letter warned that, "Cloture will be scored in the Christian Coalition scorecard which is distributed to millions of voters nationwide." In short, senators who even supported an actual vote on Foster's nomination would lose Christian Coalition support. The real issue here is not whether Foster performed abortions but whether he could lead the nation's medical professionals and whether he had the necessary qualifications to fill the position. Texas A&M Health Center Director Dr. Kenneth Dirks thinks Foster was more than qualified. Dirks said Dr. Foster founded the "I Have a Future" program in Nashville to fight teen pregnancy, and because of it, he was designated a "point of light" by Republican President George Bush. Foster also was Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at George W. Hubbard Hospital of Meharry Medical College from 1973 to 1990, and in 1990 became Dean of the school of medicine and vice president for health services at the same institution. But all the wisdom from those experiences will not matter because the Senate will never vote on the nomination. Americans don't have to stand for this kind of disrespect. Senators were hired to do a job, the voting public should make sure they do it.



**MARGULIES**  
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## 'TIL DEATH DO US PART?

### Unrealistic expectations account for soaring divorce rates

Last weekend I attended the wedding of a friend. In addition, I have six friends or acquaintances my age or younger who are engaged to be married. This is a frightening prospect, one many people do not take as seriously as they should. In 1992, 2,362,000 people were married in the United States, while 1,215,000 people were divorced, according to the preliminary findings of the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics. Almost one third of all marriages in the United States end in divorce. This is part of the reason it seems odd to look around the classrooms of Texas A&M and see so many diamonds winking from the hands of friends and strangers alike. Not everyone wants to wait until they are finished with college - or even high school - to get married. The reasons behind these young marriages range from unexpected pregnancies to finding intense compatibility with someone met at a young age. While the hormones are raging and the young love is flowing, it is relatively easy to gaze into each other's eyes and promise "forever." However, time and closeness all too often turn love into boredom and ultimately disgust. Young couples should take several steps to make sure their love is a durable one, instead of marching blindly down the aisle to



**ELIZABETH PRESTON**  
COLUMNIST

the tune of "Love Will Conquer All." Firstly and most importantly, those who enter into a marriage should do so with open eyes. A recent study on unrealistic beliefs for mate selection by Dr. Jeffrey H. Larson found that some of the biggest problems in marriages result from erroneous beliefs many of us have heard all of our lives. These include: "There is a 'one and only' right person in the world for each person to marry," "Being in love with someone is sufficient reason to marry that person," and "Until a person finds the perfect person to marry, they should not be satisfied." Larson points out that these and other commonly-held beliefs are dangerous because they encourage people to have impossible expectations about their mate. He suggests alternatives to these beliefs could be:

- "There are several individuals to whom a person could be happily married."
- "Although romantic love is important ... other factors are equally or more important to marital satisfaction and should be considered before marriage."
- "No one is perfect."

Marriage is not always a blissful state of affairs filled with endless shared giggles and serious talks about the state of the world. At its worst, it is a messy, difficult and trying experience. At its best, it is a sound base for the partners to count on and grow from. Marriage is an endeavor that must be nourished, encouraged and respected in order to succeed. Simply believing a person is "The One" is

simply not enough to make a marriage last. No marriage is always at its best, and not many thrive on the lowest level. It is important that marriage partners care enough about their relationship and each other to make it through the difficult and boring times, as well as the dramatic and exciting ones. Attending premarital counseling is a good way for partners to find out if they are compatible. While this may seem expensive or useless now, recognizing problems and expectations of each other is well worth the couple of hundred dollars. In addition, the communication techniques learned in these sessions may save marriages down the line. Everyone has seen marriages that should have never taken place, or seen friends who were very happy dating and then were married and quickly began disagreeing all the time. Those thinking about marriage should have realistic expectations of their partners. It is naive and foolish to pretend the giddy, excited love between newly-weds will be enough to last for the rest of their lives. Anyone in a relationship should take a closer look at their partner and make sure that person is someone who they are willing to work hard with to make a marriage last a lifetime. Though it may not seem like it now, the pain of breaking up today will be 100 percent easier than the pain of a divorce later.

*Elizabeth Preston is a senior English major*



## MAIL CALL

### A&M faculty, staff deserve pay raises

This letter is in response to Ginger Coffin's June 25 letter to the editor and the 19 signatures sent in with it. Our staff has been patient about salary increases. Our last pay raise was three years ago and was a small 3-percent increase. Drop by the A&M employment office and look at our pay scales sometime. A fee increase hurts you, as I am well aware. The cost of living hurts us. The last three years has seen the cost of life increase a little more than 4 percent each year.

We have been patient, but we have to make a living wage to provide for our families. The staff at TAMU maintains the facilities and provides services that allow the students to study at our University.

*Charles F. Walden*  
TAMU Graphics Arts Center

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