

SOCIAL SECURITY

Solutions found in private sector

Answer to Social Security dilemma not in entitlements, government interventions

Entitlements. What a beautiful word. Kinda slides off the tongue like Formula 44D on strep throat.

It's that time of year in Washington.

Time for the semi-annual "guns or butter debate" in the friendly confines of Congress. Yep, time to talk about those pesky entitlement things again.

We call them "entitlements" because ... well, I'm not really sure why. The only thing anyone should be entitled to is to be left alone.

Yet, in this country, entitlements means I am entitled to give the government money that I earned.

Then a bureaucrat who is entitled to receive the money gives my money — minus the bureaucrat's salary ... and his or her boss ... and their Christmas party on Grand Cayman — to someone else who feels entitled to my money.

Entitlement is a word I will never understand. Big on Congress' agenda is Social Security.

Surveys of our age group indicate that more of us believe in UFOs than believe that we will ever receive any Social Security benefits.

The President tells us not to worry because he'll save us. Yeah, and proof of UFOs exists.

First of all, the claims of Social Security's imminent

DAVID TAYLOR

COLUMNIST



demise are greatly exaggerated.

Second, Social Security, as it exists today, must die.

Our Baby-Boomer parents decided to have this grand experiment wherein they would all support our grandparents in their old age. Social Security, of course, was the perfect vehicle for this. Its scope was increased dramatically in the 60s toward this end.

Unfortunately, now we're screwed.

It's a numbers game. There are more baby boomers than Generation ... (I refuse to say the next letter).

I have a drastic idea: Do away with Social Security. Now before I get lynched, let me explain.

The program as is will go bankrupt in 2027. We have two choices right now. Either we cut benefits to fit reality — it'll never happen — or we blow the budget and increase funding.

Fortunately, another option does exist. Take the whole program away from the government and put it in the hands of the private sector.

This privatization idea has been tried in Chile.

In Chile, workers are still required to invest a certain percentage of their income in a retirement trust fund. The difference comes in the investment itself.

Here in the bastion of free choice — that would be the U.S. of A. — we get to put our retirement money in the fiscally responsible federal government. A government that has not been able to balance its books since 1969. Excuse me while I whoop.

In Chile, 24 different funds compete for investment by that country's workers.

The Chilean government helps to guarantee that the funds will still be around come retirement, but the money is in private hands — meaning it will actually increase between now and then.

Edward Crane, president of the Cato Institute, addressed this idea. He observed, "A system of private pensions is likely to have the occasional failure, but our government controlled retirement system is on the path to failing our entire generation."

Of course, for this system to work here, our politicians have to believe in free enterprise and the market.

Well, elections are coming ...

This brings us to the fundamental question: If the private sector can do a much better job with entitlements, what is the government's role?

In the words of P.J. O'Rourke, "There is only one basic human right, the right to do as you damn well please. And with it comes the only basic human duty, the duty to take the consequences."

Government exists to keep that right balanced. In the case of harm, again in the words of O'Rourke, "... that had better be clear and provable harm."

Freedom is another word that flows off the tongue.

If we really want to provide our senior citizens and ourselves with freedom from fear about our future, we must consider some drastic alternatives to government-mandated solutions.

Freedom, not entitlement, will keep us on even footing.

David Taylor is a senior management major

Christian ads offered third option

The recent ads merely meant to offer homosexuals a new way of thinking

Intolerant. Anti-homosexual. Disrespectful. In poor taste.

These are just a few of the emotionally charged criticisms leveled at last week's "Every Student's Choice" (ESC) ads in *The Battalion*.

These charges promote tremendously powerful and emotional pictures about the "rampant" bigotry on the Texas A&M campus.

However, nothing could be any further from the truth.

I think we all can agree that there are jerks in every camp. Yes, there are some who claim to be Christian who truly are intolerant and bigoted toward gays.

I have read reports of the overt sex acts performed on public property during gay rights marches in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, and of the desecration of Catholic churches in New York City by the radical group ACT UP!

Yet, I know of no gays who feel these acts should be considered representative of all homosexuals.

Whether you agree or disagree with the ads, the Christian message is motivated by compassion. If I see a tornado headed for a neighbor's house, I run and shout loudly to alert the residents to get out.

They may choose to ignore my pleas or may not believe in them, but they cannot logically claim I am intolerant to their "right" to stay in their house.

H. MICHAEL NEELY

GUEST COLUMNIST



As a Christian, I believe a lifestyle motivated by a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ is preferable to any other lifestyle.

Therefore, Christians offer options for others to consider.

As I looked at the Coming Out Week ads, I saw them as offering only two options — a person can either be gay and in the closet or openly homosexual and out of the closet.

Being out of the closet was advertised as the preferred option. The ESC ads simply added, "There is another option ... another way out of the closet."

It seems that homosexuals who are open about their chosen lifestyle are called caring and supportive when they offer an option to join them.

On the other hand, Christians are called intolerant and disrespectful when they offer a third option.

Why is it caring and supportive to call a person from heterosexuality to homosexuality and homophobic and anti-gay to call a gay or lesbian person back into heterosexuality?

I could call the overreaction on campus to the ESC ads "Christophobia" — fear of Christians who are offering options.

After all, these ads simply put forth a message by former homosexuals that their deepest needs were not met through homosexuality and homosexual relationships.

Instead, they had found their peace and purpose in a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

If homosexual individuals have problems with these testimonials, then their problem is with those who were active,

practicing homosexuals and then found a different way.

Their problem should not be with the Texas A&M Christian community at large. I know some readers are very upset at the notion of my saying there are other options preferable to the homosexual lifestyle.

The ads simply put forth a message by former homosexuals that their deepest needs were not met by homosexuality.

That's O.K. We are not forcing anyone to do or change anything. If you are truly satisfied with your choice of lifestyle, then enjoy your life with my blessing.

Options — not criticism.
 Compassion — not condemnation.
 Possibilities — not either/or choices.

These are what the "Every Student's Choice" ads presented.
 And, just as the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Association seeks to promote its world view, so should Christians present and promote theirs.

Christians have the right and responsibility to declare our pride and speak out against Christophobia. Intolerance toward Christian ideas and ideals is a not proper reaction to these ads.

H. Michael Neely is the South Region Director for Christian Leadership Ministries, the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ



MAIL CALL

Easy to critique when not involved

Chris Stidvent's Oct. 16 column on homosexuality was offensive as well as disappointing.

Typically Stidvent's columns are insightful and well-written. They are usually witty, ironic compositions that invite the reader to think about issues from a different vantage point.

His style works well; however, in this case his style was not appropriate.

Stidvent had every right to disagree with the Christian groups

that placed the ads featuring former homosexuals.

In the same manner, the Christian groups had every right to place those ads.

I was struck by the way Stidvent's style backfired on him. While writing about the ills of intolerance, Stidvent was being intolerant himself.

Even his paradox was forgivable given the uniqueness of every person's opinions and perspective, but the clincher comes when Stidvent casually sprinkles in the part about the first time he knew he liked girls.

From the context of the article,

it seems logical to assume that Stidvent is not a Christian, and he conveniently mentions that he is not a homosexual.

Thus, he really had no personal stake in the issue. Because of the style he uses, Stidvent mocks both groups who have real, legitimate concerns about the issue at hand. It is easy to feed the fires of controversy when you will be far removed from the smoke.

Jenny Magee
 Class of '96

Only 'whoop' if it's your wildcat

A&M is a school rich in its traditions, most of which serve some valid purpose.

One is the wildcat, used to distinguish classes. The freshmen 'A', the sophomores 'A-A-A', and the juniors and seniors 'Whoop!' while performing the accompanying hand signals.

Why is it then, that on the

front page of the Oct. 11 *Battalion*, the newly elected freshmen officials were pictured whooping?

Not everyone had the opportunity to attend Fish Camp and learn the ways of A&M, but these are the people just elected to represent their class. They should know about the traditions of Texas A&M.

Most of us worked hard to get where we are. Being able to 'Whoop!' may seem like a little thing, but it is our privilege. Respect it, and start pushing.

Jennifer Beckner
 Class of '96

The *Battalion* encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student ID is required. Letters may also be mailed to:

The *Battalion* - Mail Call
 013 Reed McDonald Fax: (409) 845-2647
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THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

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EDITORIAL TABLED AGAIN

The Student Senate debated about multiculturalism and decided nothing

After a long and exhaustive debate last night, the Student Senate could not reach a decision about the cultures requirement. This inability to make a decision does not benefit the University or its students.

The Senate first voted to repeal the bill it had passed two years ago, which recommended that a three-hour cultures requirement be added to the curriculum.

The bill was essentially meaningless, because more than 90 percent of students already meet the requirement.

However, the weak cultures requirement was better than none at all.

Then, the Senate voted to reconsider the bill and then tabled the issue in order to get more input from their constituents, effectively leaving it in limbo.

Apparently, those who fallaciously argued that the cultures requirement would only serve to promote a liberal agenda are winning the debate.

In reality, a cultures requirement would prepare

students for the global marketplace they will face after graduation.

Although a Student Senate resolution is non-binding, the Senate's indecision fails to give the body any credibility, and offers little direction for University President Ray Bowen.

In an ideal situation, Bowen would be able to consider all points of view before he makes a final decision.

However, the Student Senate has failed to give him anything new, and if it ever passes a bill, it will be devoid of resolution.

In the end, he should realize the Faculty Senate's alternative is the best.

Its six-hour cultures requirement would not add any hours to any student's degree plan, it covers national and international cultures and it allows students to choose from hundreds of courses.

No matter what conclusion Bowen reaches, he should make a decision soon, because this divisive issue needs resolution.

