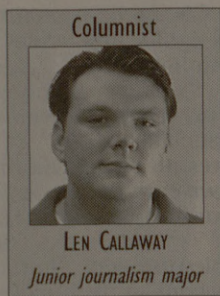


Sale of the Censory

Texas legislature aims to stifle offensive music

Recently, a rider attached to the new appropriations bill in the Texas legislature has caused some unwarranted publicity of a measure which actually does some good.

Rider #174 in Article Nine of the appropriations Act for the upcoming two years states in layman terms, that no state agency may invest its state-appropriated funds into a business entity which owns 10 percent or more of a corporation that produces or records any song that describes, glamorizes or advocates offensive subjects and actions.



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Junior journalism major

(5) Degradation or denigration of females.

(6) Violence against a particular sex, race, ethnic group, sexual orientation or religion.

This rider is the first of its kind and many questions have been raised about its solvency, pertinence, background and focus. Some factions of the media already have begun to conjure up all sorts of issues and dialogues about this matter, but the fact is that this particular piece of legislation has ultimately been misunderstood.

The argument has been made by people in the entertainment industry that this piece of legislation is a part of some conspiracy to keep the people of Texas from listening to music which some find offensive. They claim that this measure is some sort of covert action to effectively censor the artists and bands that perform and market their products in Texas. This allegation is at best inaccurate, and at worst, it is irresponsible.

This one-paragraph rider has absolutely nothing to do with what may be produced, recorded or purchased at will by the people of the state of Texas. It simply asserts that the state will no longer indirectly subsidize the manufacture or distribution of this type of material. However, this stance reveals that at some point in the past, the state has indirectly, through one of its agencies, invested in a company responsible for the manufacture or distribution of such music.

Obviously this piece of legislation is helpful and appropriate for the people of the

state and their freedoms. The government of the state of Texas has no business financially contributing to the pockets of the companies that produce music which contains material mentioned earlier. Not because the music or the expressions contained in the music are wrong, but because a majority of the people in the population would find the message of the music offensive.

Anyone who considers themselves fans of such music should be thankful that the government will now not be able to exercise any sort of financial control or political pressure on the companies that produce this music. The government should be congratulated for finally taking the initiative to butt out. Had it not, the next most logical step might have been for the government to start taxing the sale of such music above and beyond the normal sales tax. The state government has effectively dissolved its relationships with the businesses in question. This is a good move and allows for the entire situation to be politically, ethically and financially cleaner.

It is not acceptable for the government to contribute financially to companies that produce music deemed offensive by a majority of citizens until a majority of the citizens feel that this action by the legislature is appropriate. In other words, investment by state agencies in a company that produces the material in question will remain inappropriate until a majority of the voters no longer take issue with the subject matter that the music revolves around.

Both the state and federal government contribute to organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. This action is legal and appropriate because a majority of American citizens find some cultural value or benefit to this type of art.

This nation and this state were founded on the notion of democracy — majority rules. If a majority of the population find music like that of Marilyn Manson and "gangsta rap" offensive, then this art will be labeled offensive until such time as a majority of the listening public no longer deems this genre of entertainment offensive.

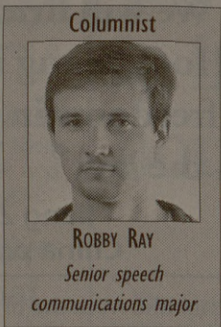
The six qualifying aspects are as follows:

- (1) Acts of criminal violence, including murder, assault, assault on police officers, sexual assault and robbery.
- (2) Necrophilia, bestiality or pedophilia.
- (3) Illegal use of a controlled substance.
- (4) Criminal street gang activity.



Drug reform warrants agenda revisions

Most serious and disturbing problem facing our nation today is the rampant use of illegal drugs by young people. One of the many programs which has been adopted by educators and law enforcement officials is D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). D.A.R.E. has gained tremendous support from those involved, but



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foreign countries. According to Glen Levant, D.A.R.E. executive director, at least \$750 million is being spent by governments and private donations each year. This is money which would be better spent on other, more effective programs.

Police and educators praise the program, but science is unable to justify their confidence. Studies in at least five states and Canada have failed to demonstrate any significant decrease in drug use as a result of the program. Thomas T. Walsh, research and statistics administrator for the South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services has compiled several of these studies on the Internet.

"Current consensus is that D.A.R.E. does significantly and positively effect student attitudes toward alcohol, tobacco and other drugs," Walsh said on the first page of his Web site, "but the findings generally indicate that exposure to D.A.R.E. does not significantly reduce actual use of those drugs."

The United States General Accounting Office agrees: "There is little evidence so far that [D.A.R.E. and other programs studied] have reduced the use of drugs by adolescents."

Part of the problem may be with D.A.R.E.'s curriculum. It is set by a 25-member board of directors in Los Angeles and based on psychological theory from the '70s called Values Clarification, now regarded as ineffective. The curriculum has only been changed once, nonetheless, only to receive more federal funding. Some studies, which feature student interviews, suggest that an approach focused more on student discussion instead of lectures would be more effective.

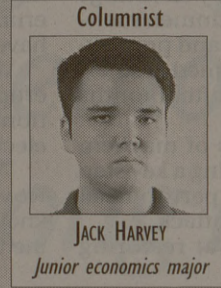
What may be even worse is that some evidence shows that D.A.R.E. might even increase drug use. University of Indiana researchers E. Wysong and R. Aniskiewicz explain. In a written report, Wysong and Aniskiewicz said, "The finding of significantly high hallucinogen use among the D.A.R.E. group raises the possibility that drug education programs may increase student curiosity about drugs and lead to earlier and greater drug experimentation."

"I tell kids they can smoke dope if they want to, as long as they consider the consequences," Geib said. This method of teaching is undermined by political and entertainment figures pushing for the legalization of marijuana. This mixed message is dangerous, especially in light of recent research showing that pot is often a "gateway" drug, leading to use of harder drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

D.A.R.E. is not without its good points. It is a phenomenal public relations tactic for police departments nationwide. It shows kids a police officer in a positive, non-threatening manner and allows them to form positive opinions about authority figures. Although this is an admirable goal, it is not the purpose of D.A.R.E., and could be accomplished by a simpler, less expensive program that would not steal funding away from anti-drug programs that really work.

Political duties of lieutenant governor evade job description

The announced retirement of Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock from public service might bring an end to an era in Texas government. The powers that he and predecessors in his office have wielded were astronomical considering the low profile they have maintained throughout the years.



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signed — never if the lieutenant governor is against it.

This effectively eliminates the power of individual senators, handing it all over to the president. People elect senators from their home districts to represent their interests to the rest of the state. The reality, however, is quite different.

The lieutenant governor also has the ability to establish the order in which bills are to be considered. All thousands of bills considered in the senate every year cannot be seriously contemplated, and this is a way for the lieutenant governor to bury those not to his liking.

The two powers mentioned that are granted by special rules every year are considerable, but not the end of the list. Over the years, lieutenant governors have used their power to gain more power. Knowing these powers could be taken away from them, they strived to gain powers granted by statutory law pushed through the system by their perennial powers.

Arguably the most important of the statutory powers is the influence the lieutenant governor has on state expenditures. The five-member legislative budget board recommends a fiscal plan to the legislature every other year, and it is generally passed with most of the major parts intact. The lieutenant governor is the chairman who also appoints all of the members.

One can imagine the inherent power in this position. The fact that he proposes a budget, and then carefully guides it though the senate is a reality most people do not know. The potential for power abuse is great, but the power of the individual voter and his or her representative is frighteningly little in comparison.

The lieutenant governor, furthermore, also is a member of the legislative audit committee which determines whether there has been any misappropriation in the budget or any sort of ethics violations such as conflicts of interest. This is a like the wolf in sheep's clothing guarding the flock.

The lieutenant governor has grown so powerful that the senate that granted his powers, ironically, is powerless, to take them back.

Perhaps the election of a new lieutenant governor will mark a shift in the tide of political power back to the people if the voters are adamant about it.



MAIL CALL

Air bag technology takes liberal stance

In response to General Franklin's June 26 column:

Franklin's column on air bags is just another example of the bias in the media in its infancy.

As I expected, this liberal idealism comes from the intense exposure to the "academia" environment which has no idea how real life works.

Only "reporter types" could be naive enough to believe that increasing technology on these air bags is going to cost only \$48. Perhaps this is what Siemens will charge the automobile companies, but let's not

forgot one major thing: What will the auto companies charge the public?

We're talking more like hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars. The money, however, is not the point.

The real issue is the constant "nannying" of the federal government that the Republican majority elected in 1994 is trying to eliminate.

Why do liberals insist upon invading people's privacy in order to save them from themselves.

If Franklin had listened to the auto industry a few years ago, he would have found out that air bags will succumb to killing the very people they are trying to save.

Liberals were warned about this far in advance, but it seems their irrational, emotional and good intentions got the best of them once again.

Here's what I propose: Air bags should be equipped with an on and off switch so consumers can make the choice whether they want to kill their children or not.

We don't need more govern-

ment mandates on how to live our lives.

Furthermore, the more we micromanage lives, the more we interfere with the essential liberties granted us by God (via the Constitution).

Always remember what Benjamin Franklin said: "He that would give up essential liberties in the pursuit of safety, deserves neither liberty, nor safety."

Peter Winter
Class of '89

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MIKE WICKOVICH ATLANTA CHRISTIANITY

