

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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Police must be trustworthy

There are some positions in which we must hold individuals to higher standards. For example, we have higher expectations of our political leaders than we do individuals who frequent daytime talk shows. We also expect more from our police officers than we do from our typical college student. In upholding Matthew Collins' firing from the Bryan Police Department last week, Mark Sherman, a professional arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association, made it clear society requires higher standards from police officers at a time when police are losing the citizens' trust.

According to *The Eagle*, Collins was indefinitely suspended by Bryan Police Chief Ken Burton in September after an August incident at the Crooked Path Ale House in which Collins was asked to leave but refused. Even after police arrived, Collins remained belligerent and was issued a criminal trespass warning. Worse, Collins is accused of lying about the incident during an internal affairs investigation conducted by the Bryan Police Department.

According to *The Eagle*, Collins' attorney, Paul Aman, said termination was not necessary and a lengthy suspension would have been a more suitable punishment. However, this view refuses to acknowledge the power Collins can wield as a member of the Bryan Police Department. This community has high standards for the individuals who patrol their streets, and reinstating Collins would have lowered those standards.

Citizens today have enough difficulty trusting police without having individuals such as Collins amongst their numbers. In Hearne, for instance, the Robertson County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People organized a public forum last week to discuss race relations between black Hearne residents and the Hearne Police Department. The forum stemmed from recent allegations that a black man was beaten by white police officers in Hearne on July 12. According to *The Eagle*, residents expressed concern about the police department and some offered firsthand experiences of poor race relations with the local police.

Distrust such as this can result in serious consequences. In Cincinnati last year, citizens rioted after a Cincinnati Police Officer shot an unarmed black youth in the back, one of several instances of a white police officer shooting a black suspect in Cincinnati. While this is an extreme response to many years of racial tension, the issue remains — the community must be able to trust its officers. Charges of lying during an internal investigation make it impossible for a community to believe an officer during other investigations and proceedings. Such distrust is a liability to a police department which searches for the truth in various matters every day.

Possible racism is not the only issue in which public distrust of the police has become an issue. According to the *Houston Chronicle*, one of the reasons Houston Police Department union officials oppose a new policy requiring officers to collect phone numbers on traffic stops is because the people already distrust police, and the policy might harm this already strained relationship.

While Collins' actions may not have been deserving of termination in another form of employment, the position of a police officer demands trustworthiness and honor. If individuals such as Collins are unable to live up to such lofty ideals, they must be replaced by those who will. Police officers are simply in too important a position in this community for anything less.

Richard Bray is a senior journalism major.



RICHARD BRAY

Questionable reasoning

U.S. removes money from fund fighting overpopulation

Last week, the U.S. Department of State announced that \$34 million appropriated by Congress for donation to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) would not be donated and would instead be diverted to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The UNFPA's purpose is to teach family planning in countries around the globe to help control growth of the world population and to help fight the spread of AIDS. The United States was one of the founders of the fund, but since 1986 has been sporadic in its support. This latest move, however, has drawn heavy criticism from the U.N. and leaders of the European Union.

The Bush Administration has enacted the Kemp-Kasten amendment to deny the Congressional appropriation, even though a three man fact-finding trip in the State Department made an official recommendation to Secretary of State Colin Powell that the funds not be withheld. The Bush administration has defended the move by saying the UNFPA sponsors programs in the People's Republic of China, and that China coerces many of its women into having abortions.



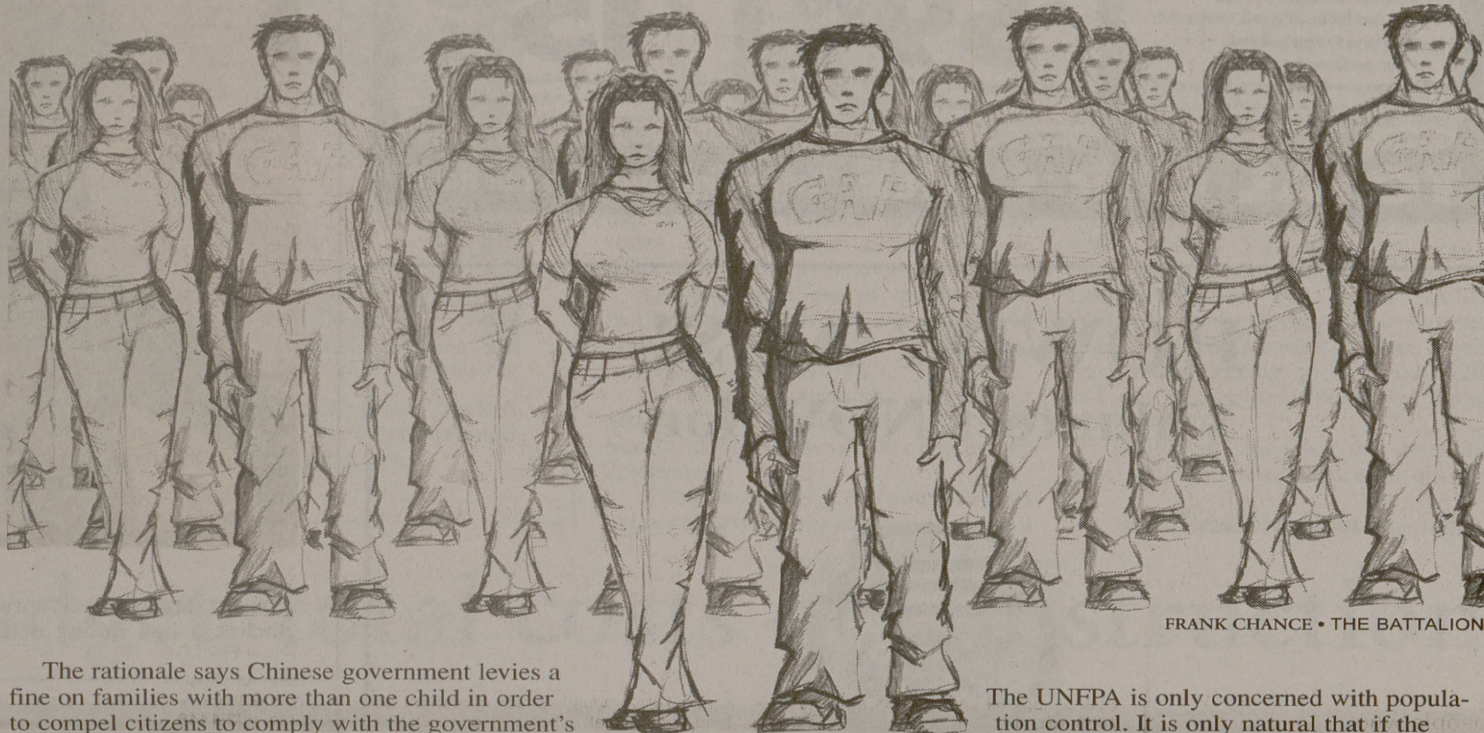
MICHAEL WHITLOW

Thoraya Obaid, executive director for the UNFPA, predicts the money the United States withdrew would have prevented 800,000 induced abortions.

Additionally, the executive director of the UNFPA has estimated the \$34 million would also have been enough to prevent 2 million unwanted pregnancies, nearly 5,000 maternal deaths, 60,000 cases of maternal illness and nearly 80,000 child deaths.

This is before one even reaches the question of HIV/AIDS. In a country projected to have 10 million citizens infected with AIDS by the year 2010, sex education and family planning is part of the necessary fight against the AIDS epidemic. U.N. experts project will claim 70 million lives by the year 2022.

That the administration is diverting the funds to one of its own agencies does not indemnify it. USAID currently has population assistance programs in only 60 countries, compared to the UNFPA's 140. USAID is also involved in environmental initiatives, information technology abroad and disaster assistance. While these and other causes USAID is involved with are noble, such diversity of purpose requires a lot of administrative effort.



FRANK CHANCE • THE BATTALION

The rationale says Chinese government levies a fine on families with more than one child in order to compel citizens to comply with the government's one child policy. Women, not wanting to pay the fine, are likely to have abortions. Therefore, the fines amount to a "coercive" effort by Chinese authorities towards abortions. The rationale continues by saying the UNFPA, through working in counties where these fines are levied, contributes to this effort by virtue of working alongside government authorities.

The holes in this logic are too numerous to count, and, in light of many of America's domestic and foreign policies, it is very hypocritical. First and foremost, the idea of a fine is no more than punishment for going against a government policy. Yet, in using everything from speeding tickets to prison sentences, America depends upon the threat of punishment to prevent unwanted social behavior. In China's case, the fines are meant as a deterrent to getting pregnant to begin with, not as encouragement to have an abortion after the fact. The subtle distinction here is easily abided by with the aid of the family planning services the UNFPA offers, such as the education of and supplying of birth control methods.

China, faced with a significant portion of the world's population and abysmally high population density, is struggling to contain the growth of its population before the economy and resources collapse under the strain. While no one, especially the UNFPA, supports coercive abortions, there are other options available for managing population growth. The UNFPA has already stated it does not support coercive abortion tactics and has threatened to withdraw money and personnel from any area where they perceive these tactics being employed.

The Chinese government has repeatedly acknowledged the benefit of the UNFPA's work and requires county offices to post notices stating it is illegal to prevent any births or conduct pregnancy tests on unmarried young women. Since the UNFPA began working in China in 1998, it has found no evidence of coerced abortions in any of the 32 counties in which it has programs. The UNFPA's presence may be all that prevents coercive tactics from being employed. Cutting the UNFPA's funding to the point they are forced to withdraw would be counter-productive.

The UNFPA is only concerned with population control. It is only natural that if the United States shares this interest with the United Nations, the two should consolidate efforts, not draw apart as the United States has done. In the post-9/11 war on terrorism, the United States has expected a lot of help from its neighbors. This move does not demonstrate the same spirit of cooperation.

Furthermore, the state department's own fact finders recommendation that the administration not withhold the funds shows the government is not basing its decision on the facts reported by its own investigators. Because the word abortion keeps popping up, one must wonder whether this is nothing more than a nod to conservative interest groups. The state department and the United Nation's own people cannot offer any evidence of coerced abortions. However, the administration refuses to offer any justification for its decision beyond this. It is more likely the conservative administration is refusing to participate out of a simple opposition to family planning services.

The issue of human rights abuses in China is by no means a small one, but there are better ways to take a stance on it than refusing aid to a humanitarian organization. The UNFPA's purpose in promoting family planning and controlling population growth has long-lasting impacts upon the environment and the AIDS epidemic that is now a global threat. Whatever one's ideological objections are to sex education, it is necessary to fight the spread of HIV, and abortion is a family-planning option.

The worst thing about this decision is that it is doomed to fail to accomplish its stated objectives. China's largest problem is the growth of its population. If organizations like UNFPA are not allowed to educate people about healthy, safe family planning options and make these options available to governments facing population crises, we are giving those governments no alternative to forced abortions and sterilizations to solve their problem. Unless we cease to perpetuate this vicious catch-22 in the name of conservative ideology, innocent people will continue to suffer.

Michael Whitlow is a senior English major.

MAIL CALL

Separate garage spots for SUVs

It was recently announced that parking rates are going up in the parking garages to increase security and safety among other things.

I have a very simple safety suggestion that would cost the Department of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) nothing. As a driver of a passenger car, there is always a feeling of unease backing out from between a pickup and a large SUV. Why not require passenger cars to park on one side

of the ramps and larger vehicles to park on the other? Since there are probably more larger vehicles (unfortunately for the environment), have them park on the outside walls (since there are more spaces) and passenger vehicles park on the inside spaces. Visitors would have no problem determining inside from outside since the walls have slots to the outside. This would cost very little (an occasional enforcement drive by a PTTS officer) and would prevent fender benders.

John H. Wormuth

React to child, not the crime

(U-WIRE) UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — In today's world criminal children have become the focus of a lot of media attention, whether or not there has been an actual rise in crimes committed by youths. We hear about children shooting up schools, children committing assault. We are shocked and hurt when we see children, America's most treasured resource, betraying us by acting like the hardened criminals our society is already rife with. Many people seem to react by crying out for these kids to be locked up and put away, far from the view of more "civilized" society so that they no longer are a problem.

How do we get "problem" children as far away from us as possible? By taking them out of the juvenile courts and putting them into a justice system designed for adults. Taking children out of juvenile court has got to be one of the biggest miscarriages of justice currently

practiced in America today.

How can a child be expected to become a better person and learn from their crime when they are tried and sentenced as an adult? They are still learning, their values have not fully developed and, in many cases, the child suffers from abuse or poverty and, when placed in a better situation, can grow to be a perfectly normal individual.

Prosecutors do not look to what might have caused such behavior. Instead, they take a "tough on crime" attitude and throw the child into adult court, where he or she will have little chance of actually being rehabilitated or helped in any way.

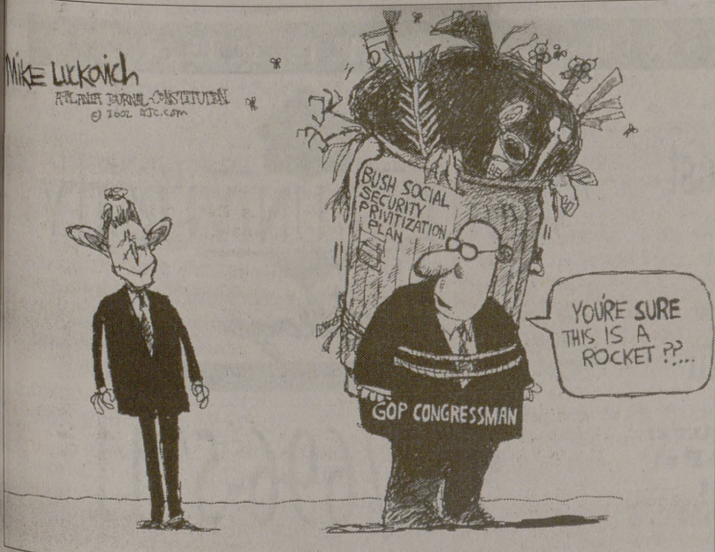
Maybe that is why we have begun to turn to another method of "curing" our violent youth. We put them to death. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that a sentence of death for persons as young as 16 is not "cruel and unusual." More than 160 children under the age of 18 have

been sentenced to death since 1973.

What this boils down to is fear. We are afraid of these killer children and what they represent in our society. What makes a 10-year-old pull out a gun and shoot? There are two options: either Americans spawn some of the most violent children in the world, or the world they are growing up in is teaching them it is okay to act this way.

It is the responsibility of the parents, the justice system and society as a whole to work together to help a generation of troubled kids become better people. We must learn to react to the child and not to the crime, because if we disregard the welfare of our youth in such a manner justice will never be properly served to those who need it the most — kids.

Andrea Staargaard is a columnist for the Daily Collegian.



Mike Lickoich