

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

Page 5B • Thursday, April 3, 2003

## Daschle's partisan agenda exposed

Minority leader's views on Iraq have done a 180-degree turn since Clinton's term



Tom Daschle personifies all that is wrong with politics. Politics is among the least trusted professions, and with good cause. When a vocal leader such as Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) allows his opinion to change with the winds of public influence, there is a major problem.

In 1998, Tom Daschle was among President Clinton's biggest proponents throughout the impeachment scandal. Late in 1998, Clinton launched an attack on Iraq while pulling America's inspectors out of Iraq.

"We have virtually exhausted our diplomatic effort to get the Iraqis to comply with their own agreements and with international law. What other option is there but to force them to do so? We don't have another option. We have got to force them to comply, and we are doing so militarily," Daschle said in defense of Clinton.

Not only did Daschle agree with attacking Iraq, he co-sponsored a Senate resolution giving Clinton the ability "to take all necessary and appropriate actions to respond to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons of mass destruction programs."

The diplomacy between Iraq and the United States has not improved in the past five years.

But now, Daschle has done a 180-degree turn. Instead of being a huge proponent of attacking Iraq and taking a proactive stance in the war against terrorism, Daschle is against it. The only thing that has changed in the past five years is that more than 3,000 additional Americans are dead at the hands of terrorists and a new president is in the White House.

"The president has failed so miserably at diplomacy that we are now forced to war," Daschle told a convention of firemen soon after the first strike against Iraq in March.

By blaming Bush for a matter that he has no control over, Daschle is pandering to the anti-war sentiment and slandering our president. Why not blame Bush for lack of relations with Fidel Castro while



THOMAS CAMPBELL

he's at it?

The reason America has no international relations with Saddam Hussein is because he is an insane dictator.

How can Daschle be trusted with such an important position as minority leader when he cannot even remain consistent on a subject so important as war?

While America has young men and women giving their lives, it is irresponsible for Daschle to imply that the president has compromised their safety.

Daschle is pursuing partisan politics at a time when America needs to stand behind the commander in chief and show support for our troops. Instead, he is undermining the ability of the leader of our forces, which is terrible for morale.

This is not the first time Tom Daschle has been exposed as a poor political partisan. In 2002, Daschle attached an amendment to a defense bill to exempt timber cutting only in his South Dakota homeland from lawsuits and appeals from citizens.

Daschle supported \$20 billion in unauthorized year-end spending while criticizing the Bush Administration for the national deficit.

South Dakota passed a referendum to abolish the "death tax" while their elected leader was voting it down in Washington. Great job listening to your constituents, Mr. Daschle.

As Daschle marches left, America keeps moving forward. The further Daschle marches off-center, the better it is for Republicans. Democrats would be smart to find another leader, preferably one without the ability to talk out of both sides of his mouth at once.

As long as there are men like Tom Daschle in Washington, politicians will never be trusted, and with good reason. If Daschle runs for president, the American people will see through his harmful partisanship, and our soldiers will be saluting George W. Bush for four more years.

Thomas Campbell is a senior agricultural journalism major. Graphic by Becky Maiden.



## High student voter turnout could impact city election

While record voter turnout in the recent student elections is impressive, one need only look at recent College Station city elections to see an almost anti-social level of student involvement. Rather than allowing this to continue, students should realize the great potential for increased student involvement in city government and take advantage of the opportunity to influence, and eventually gain positions on, College Station's City Council.

According to election results published in a May 5 article in The Bryan-College Station Eagle, the current mayor of College Station, Ron Silvia, was elected in 2002 with only 1,787 votes out of nearly 3,500. The recent student elections saw more than 12,000 students flock to the polls, with some candidates receiving more than 5,000 votes, according to a March 28 article in The Battalion. While voting in campus elections can be done online and is thus easier to do than voting in a city election, it would take only a small fraction of students voting in city elections to have a significant impact on, if not complete control of, the results.

Thursday is the last day to register to vote in the upcoming May 3 city council election, according to [www.bcvoters.org](http://www.bcvoters.org). Students who have not yet registered to vote in Brazos County should download the registration form from the Web site and mail it in immediately. Additionally, students concerned with student participation in city elections should consider joining Aggies for Democracy, also called the Maroon Party, a student organization that aims to get students actively involved in local politics. Kyle Whatley, director of the Maroon Party, said in a recent Battalion article that "if students begin to voice their opinions and become active in local politics, they will begin to see their concerns addressed." Whatley is exactly right.

Students need to take action to

make their voices heard as they typically are not afforded much if any of their representatives' attention. This is evidenced in particular by the fact that city elections are held at times that are extremely inconvenient for students. This semester they are being held during finals week, as they were last spring.

Additionally, Whatley said, a polling site for city elections is not always available on campus. It is only by electing representatives who are actually concerned with listening to students' needs that students can hope to gain input on the city council's actions and have elections moved to a more reasonable place and time of year.

Further, while many may be annoyed with and poke fun at the usual barrage of advertisements and flyers that accompany campus elections, the frenzy created by the candidates and their campaign staffs makes apparent the potential for student leaders to run for, and win, positions on the College Station City Council.

The need for student involvement in city elections is made particularly obvious as, according to College Station City Secretary Connie Hooks in a Feb. 20 Battalion article, the College Station City Council is considering raising the age requirement to run for a city council position from 18 to 21. This consideration is clearly aimed at preventing most college students from holding city council positions, and the idea that college students should not be allowed to serve on the city council of a college town is ridiculous.

Last year, Texas A&M student Jaime Cruz ran unsuccessfully for mayor, but all that is needed to elect students to council positions is the organization and energy that is already afforded to campus elections. Candice McFarland, director of administration for the Maroon Party, said in a recent Battalion article that perhaps the city council is considering the age change because it is afraid that with the

help of organizations like the Maroon Party, student candidates for city council will have enough support to actually win the elections. The student body needs merely to get its clichéd foot in the door to become a respected part of the city electorate, but the time left to do so is running short as the current city council is considering shutting the door completely on student candidates for city council positions.

Additionally, the Student Government Association has a prime opportunity to assist in supporting student involvement in city politics, along with supporting students running for city council positions. A voter registration drive could accompany the campaigning for campus elections, and voter registration could actually be done at campus election polling places. This would fit in precisely with their mission statement (listed on their Web site) of serving A&M by "representing student opinion." SGA and the Maroon Party, as two organizations trying to represent students and their opinions in different ways, have a unique chance to work together to increase student voter turnout in city elections and to create organized support for students running for city council.

More than 40,000 students attend A&M, and the recent campus elections clearly demonstrate that many of these students are eager to have their voices heard. Students should continue with their enthusiasm to have an effect on Texas A&M and College Station by turning out in record numbers for future city council elections and casting their votes for candidates that will act as true representatives of the student body at A&M. With continued student involvement in both campus and city elections, students will be able to eventually gain positions on the city council and put the "college" back into the College Station City Council.

Nicholas Neumann is a graduate computer science major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Iraqis not the only ones mistreating POWs

In response to David Shoemaker's April 2 column:

It is the height of American hypocrisy to claim that Iraqi forces are violating the Geneva Convention. The United States has invaded a sovereign country without any provocation, in violation of all international laws. And yet it talks about Iraq not following the same laws! Where was the Geneva Convention when Iraqi prisoners of war were being paraded in front of US television cameras, a fact which Shoemaker conveniently chose to ignore when writing his article?

The other issue is, why would someone who is portrayed to be such an evil monster (even the anti-war people are in agreement on this point) bother to follow international laws when he stands to gain nothing from doing so?

If Saddam treats POWs humanely, is the United States going to stop the hunt for him? If he stops suicide bombings, is the United States going to stop bombing his palaces? It is ridiculous to accuse someone of being immoral and appeal to his morality and ethics at the same time.

To me it sounds like the United States is whining when it talks about Iraqi soldiers not following international laws. Does the United States expect the Iraqis to simply roll over and play dead while U.S. forces continue to bomb their country into the stone age?

Vinod Srinivasan  
Graduate Student

#### Not all HLKN faculty share same views

There is much misinformation being printed on The Battalion's Opinion page and in Mail Call letters this week about the controversy engendered by the earliest draft of the College of Education and Human Development Statement of Tolerance. A few updates follow.

FACT: The language in that statement was changed from "celebrate and promote" to "value and respect" with reference to all members of the Texas A&M community, including diversity in sexual orientation. It is the revised language that was unanimously approved by our Dean's Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) on March 26.

FACT: Our Dean Jane Conoley did not write this statement; it was crafted by faculty members of the FAC.

FACT: The letter sent to the FAC expressing deep concerns about the earlier version of this Statement of Tolerance was signed by eight Health & Kinesiology fac-

ulty. Their views are not shared by all HLKN faculty, who number over 80 total members. Most importantly, their views are not shared by all faculty who subscribe to Judeo-Christian ethical and scriptural teachings, many of whom are distressed to have their religious beliefs misrepresented by global generalizations.

FACT: No one has been fired or removed from his/her current administrative post. Our dean has refused to do so. However, she has not "silenced" dissent on this issue; she continues to encourage it. (It appears she has moved too far for many faculty, and not far enough for others.)

FACT: "Sexual orientation" is included in the University's official diversity statement (see [www.tamu.edu/00/text/start/divr.html](http://www.tamu.edu/00/text/start/divr.html)).

My hope is that we can all work together to make this great University a place that lives up to the intentions listed on that diversity Web page, and to assure a safe and respectful environment for everyone, including our gay and lesbian faculty, staff, and students.

Susan Bloomfield  
Associate Professor  
Dept. of Health & Kinesiology

#### Baseball games shouldn't interrupt Silver Taps

I've got a little story for you, Ags. Last Tuesday night, me and a few thousand of my fellow Aggies were standing outside the Academic Building at around 10:30 for a little tradition we here in Aggieland like to call Silver Taps. Now, I've been here for almost five years now and attended quite a few Silver Taps in that time, and therefore, I'm pretty familiar with the basic routine.

However, this month as the Ross Volunteers marched into place, I noticed a distinctive sound that I had never heard before — loud cheering coming from the direction of Olsen Field. It seems some very thoughtful individual in the athletic department had decided to schedule a baseball game during Silver Taps. Now try to put yourself in the shoes of the friends and family of the individuals we were honoring that night. How would you feel if you were standing out there to remember your loved one and all you can hear is loud cheering from fellow Aggies during this most solemn event?

I, for one, was extremely embarrassed and would like to apologize to these individuals. I hope the athletic department will have the foresight to consider things like this in the future when scheduling events.

Joel Neuber  
Class of 2002