

Sad state of affairs

No Child Left Behind Act fails to fix problems in the U.S. education system

Teaching is perhaps one of the most underappreciated professions in America. For a group of people that devotes so much time and energy to educating future generations of this nation, the respect and assistance it deserves is lacking. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which was supposed to improve education in the United States, only places more burdens on American teachers, limiting their ability to improve education in the public schools.



JONATHAN STEED

The act itself has high goals that deserve praise. However, the policies of the legislation have left educators across the United States with more red tape and less necessary resources to improve performance. Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, says the program has two main flaws. The first of these flaws involves how the government measures performance in the public school system. The second flaw is that No Child Left Behind is not adequately funded.

These problems make the act incapable of reaching its own goals. States rely on standardized tests to measure the performance of children in schools. In Texas, for example, the state uses the new TAKS test, a revision of the old TAAS test, to determine whether pupils are meeting basic standards. If the TAKS test illustrates the standard educators set for public school students, that standard is severely lacking. Furthermore, these tests place an unfair burden on teachers throughout the nation. Rather than teaching the core curriculum of the class, teachers often are forced to spend a great amount of time teaching the test itself.

This has shifted the focus from teaching students about the founding fathers of the United States or about Shakespeare's masterpieces, to teaching them how to read a reading comprehension passage and answer the questions. It's no wonder many of today's high school graduates don't know the basics of history or literature.

The second flaw that presents the biggest obstacle to improving education involves the lack of resources given to schools by the No Child Left Behind program. According to the National Education Association, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 "focuses on punishments rather than assistance, mandates rather than support for effective programs and privatization rather than teacher-led, family oriented solutions." Feldman says the promise to devote more money for after-school programs, summer school and professional development support for teachers has been broken by the Bush administration. The law in general is an

unfounded mandate. The government has now put all these new regulations on schools and educators yet has failed to provide adequate financial resources to meet them.

Because of increased red tape and inadequate education funds, teachers across America have to carry an extra unfair burden on their backs. Teaching the standardized tests and meeting governmental accountability measurements have resulted in gargantuan amounts of paperwork without increases in teacher salaries. Teachers are now required to do even more work without more pay. In many states, teachers lack basic collective bargaining rights and thus must submit to these new failed educational standards without any political leverage. Teachers' voices, like those of organized groups such as the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, have been ignored.

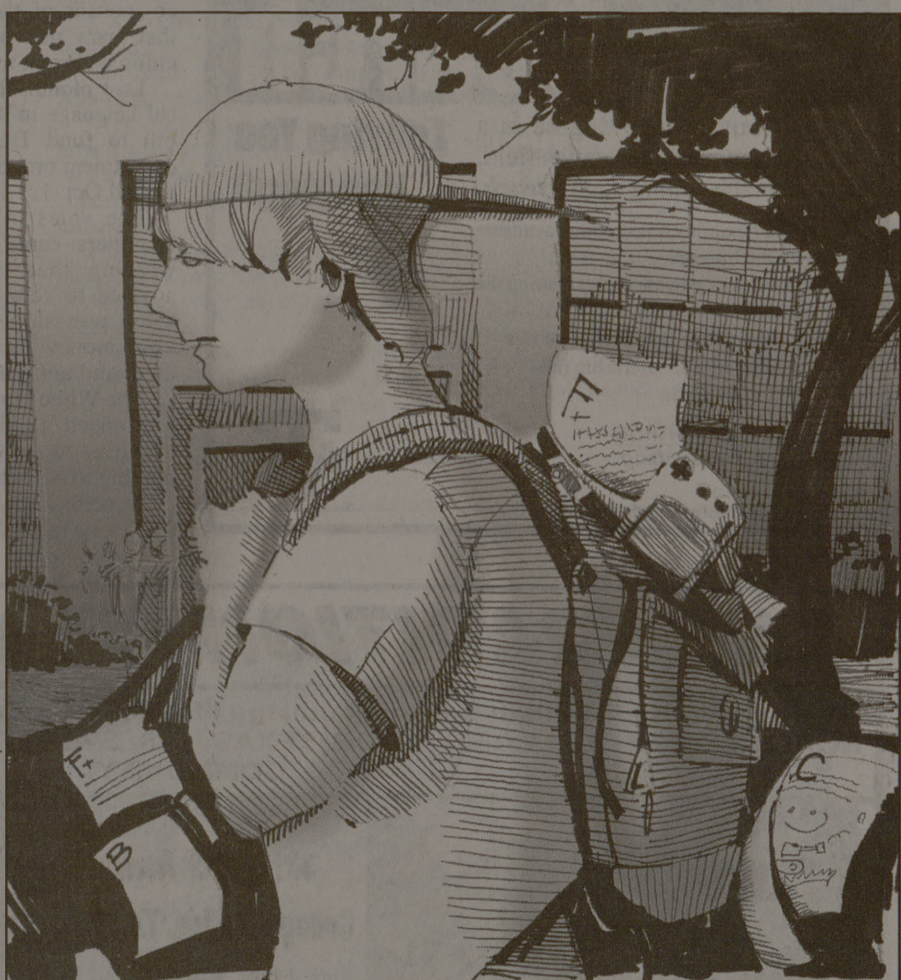
This presents the biggest threat to public education itself.

The problem in the American education system goes beyond performance on measurement tests. The real problem lies in the priorities of politicians in Washington and Austin who don't make education a number one priority. There is something wrong in the American society when felons sit in air-conditioned jails while many children sit in un-air conditioned portable classrooms. Something is wrong when members of Congress are giving themselves a pay raise while school districts are cutting teacher salaries.

The priorities of this nation must be redirected toward improving the quality of life for all children so they can get a decent education.

Children need one-on-one relationships with their teachers so they can get the attention necessary to learn subject material. Politicians need to allocate more money to reduce classroom size so teachers can spend more time with each child.

The Bush administration and others need to put the money where their mouth is. There is no reason why the most powerful, prosperous nation in the world shouldn't have the best public education for its citizens. Programs such as the No Child



PAUL WILSON • THE BATTALION

Left Behind Act of 2001 might have lofty goals, and those goals are attainable, but only if the program is adequately funded and provides flexibility for local school districts and teachers. Until this happens, the United States will simply be one nation, under-educated.

Jonathan Steed is a senior political science major.

Other states must not follow California recall example

The votes are in and the people have spoken.



HAYDEN MIGL

The people of California have recalled one governor and appointed a movie star in his place. Other states with the option of recalling their state-elected employees should not follow California's lead. The campaign and election in the Golden State revealed flaws in the recall process, and these should be corrected before any more recalls are attempted to keep the political process serious.

Davis was recalled by about 55 percent of voters, and Schwarzenegger received 48 percent of the vote to replace him. The process gave California national attention for more than two months and some believe the political process has lost credibility. It was not the recall process itself which resulted in the credibility lost, but the way in which the process was carried out. Setting up a uniform procedure to narrow

the number of potential candidates would avoid the political circus that ensued in California. Politics should not become a joke, but it can be seen as nothing else when a porn star, an adult magazine publisher and a comedian run for a state office. There should be guidelines to test the candidates' true intentions for running, and the qualifications need to be much tougher than they are in California. All that was required to get your name on California's ballot for governor was \$3,500 and 65 signatures.

Many states allow the public to recall local elected employees according to FOXNews.com, but only 18 states allow the recall of statewide officials. Most of these states are located in the western United States. Nevada is one of these, and it is currently collecting signatures to get a recall placed on its next ballot. The state wants Republican Gov. Kenny Guinn

recalled for raising taxes. The people of Nevada need to postpone their recall process and wait until a more logical system is in place to avoid another circus-like race that becomes fodder for political comedians.

Schwarzenegger now has the chance to fulfill his campaign promises, and he must begin right away. His state budget plan is due by Jan. 10, according to abcnews.com. This gives him only a couple of months to correct the \$8 billion budget shortfall, which is the reason Davis was ousted. Schwarzenegger needs to capitalize on his opportunity and show the rest of the country he was not elected just because he is a movie star. If Schwarzenegger is unable to do this, he will prove just how little legitimacy the California

recall process has. The transfer of power between the governors must be smooth, and the results of the election

should not be questioned if California hopes to maintain any political credibility. Lawyers and recounts should be kept out.

Fortunately, Davis seems to be doing the right thing. He realizes he was voted out by a majority of the voters, and a replacement has been chosen. Davis has promised to give up his office with honor, and the citizens of California as well as people throughout the country should admire Davis if he steps out of the spotlight honorably. A long mess, such as what occurred after the 2000 presidential election, should be avoided.

Other states thinking about recalling their own elected officials need to realize the damage it does to a state's credibility and wait until a more logical recall procedure is created. Maybe they can wait until the next election to replace the disliked official instead of causing another political circus.

Hayden Migl is a freshman political science major.

"Politics should not become a joke, but it can be seen as nothing else when a porn star, an adult magazine publisher and a comedian run for state office."

MAIL CALL

Mourning as friend would have wanted

In response to an Oct. 22 mail call:

Levi was a dear friend of mine, someone who I will cherish as long as I live, and I know that everyone who ever met Levi shares the same feeling. I can honestly say that I have not laughed harder in my life than shooting the bull with his father, uncle and their buddy on the night Levi passed talking about things I probably can't mention here. In our mourning we celebrated the follies and successes of his life, and the reality of Levi's life was expressed in the actions and tributes of everyone who he touched, and they were represented well in his article.

When Levi's mother told me Levi's memorial would be an "informal little thing for people to share Levi stories," I laughed and said, "Yes ma'am, we call those grody stories." And she said, "I know, and that's the way it should be."

In every way we all mourned, we

made a point to be constructive as Levi would see it. We went to the Chicken with his family, drank and played bones. We killed the biggest tree we could find — with his family. And we all laughed very hard about the incomparable Levi Windle.

Dion McInnis
Class of 2003

Article accurately reflected Aggie's life

I understand that Ms. Ruoff was not affiliated with Levi Windle in any way. I am not blaming her for thinking the article was disrespectful, but as a personal friend of Levi Windle, I do not think a better article could have been written.

This article included comments from both his friends and his family, so it was not disgracing him or his family in any way. Levi was the kind of guy who would have enjoyed reading the thoughts and memories people had about him, and these particular ones depicted him best as a person.

Levi would want to be remembered as the guy who closed down the Chicken every night and one who was out at the bonfire cut site every weekend cutting down trees.

If Ms. Ruoff had been at his memorial service on Monday, she may have heard that every story told about Levi stated exactly who he was and what he did as a person. She may also have seen the way that so many of the students at this University feel about him. He touched everyone's heart who had known him for a time as little as an hour.

Shelby Noble
Class of 2006

Response belittled memories of a friend

It was quite apparent that Ms. Ruoff never had a chance to meet Levi Windle. The story referred to in the mail call reflects the type of person Levi was to his friends. He was a fun-loving, caring individual whose many crazy stunts molded

and defined who he was.

This story, and many like it, were told at his funeral in Rudder on Monday and had the entire attendance, including family and friends, laughing about how he devoted his life to making everyone around him smile. What Ms. Ruoff did is publicly belittle someone's fond memory of a dear friend recently lost.

Chad Hutson
Class of 2002

Stories of friend are a prized possession

I would like to applaud The Battalion for the article that was written about Levi Windle. As a long time friend of Levi's, I was appreciative to read the article that was written. The article was not meant to be disgraceful or disrespectful to his memory. Instead, it was an interpretation of the things that we remember about him.

I am sure that The Battalion meant no disrespect and that they were

only trying to display the man that Levi was. I know for a fact that Levi's family and friends took comfort in the words of remembrance that were displayed in the article.

I am sure that nobody was ever truly "mortified" by Levi's actions. Levi was a man that made people smile and laugh. By not knowing who Levi really was, it is hard to judge what can be considered bad or good representation of his character. He was a good man and he will be deeply missed by those of us who knew him well. If he was not a man of good character then us as friends would not be working so hard to aid his family in his medical expenses.

I only hope that other students attending this University will read the article about Levi and learn that friends are forever and that you should continue to cherish every moment that you spend with them and hold those memories as a prized possession because you never know when it will all be taken away.

Kayla Wade
Class of 2005

October 24, 2003

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Rachel Tamer
Class of 2007

Pentecostal

Victory
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8 - H Brothers
and the C.S. Wal-Mart
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Presbyterian

Station Korean
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696-0403

Worship - 2:00p.m.

Presbyterian Church

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am W. Steele - Pastor

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Monday School:
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