

## DREAMing big

### Act granting citizenship to illegal aliens irresponsible and potentially dangerous

Everyone dreams, whether they can recall their dreams or not. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream. REM's Michael Stipe claimed the eclectic lyrics of "It's the End of the World as We Know It" were inspired by a dream. Even Gary Coleman had a dream to one day live in a Sacramento mansion. But Orrin Hatch, the Republican senator from Utah, has a dream which would, while extending U.S. citizenship to illegal aliens, potentially grant them in-state tuition at public universities throughout the country.



MICHAEL WARD

This is not a dream; it sounds like a nightmare. Co-sponsored by California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Hatch's bill, according to The Washington Times, "would allow a six-year grace period for illegal immigrants who grew up in the United States and graduated from a U.S. high school, during which they would be exempt from deportation. If they finished two years of college or served two years in the military during that time, they could earn permanent legal residence in the United States." Also, according to The Times, the bill would allow states to grant illegal aliens in-state tuition at public colleges.

If it sounds like the equivalent of homesteading for U.S. citizenship, it is. One wonders how long it took the politi-

cians to convert "give illegal aliens benefits that most U.S. citizens don't receive" into the puffed-up, heart-wrenching "Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors," or DREAM, Act.

With pressing issues facing U.S. citizens such as, say, a war on terror and a soft economy, the irresponsibility of this sort of legislation looms like a murky cloud over the shoulder of Hatch — and it stinks.

In a building paid for by U.S. taxpayers, and politicians salaried by U.S. citizens are writing legislation that has the interests of illegal aliens at heart. Public officials have no right to draft legislation, the tangibility of which — to the average U.S. citizen — is so obscure as to be irrelevant. Legislation allocating funds for studying the viscosity of Heinz ketchup would be more responsible. At least it's an American company.

But, moving past the irresponsible existence of the bill, one finds more foolishness: citizenship for military service. Given the arrest last month of the Army's Ahmed Fathy Mehalba, a naturalized citizen and Arabic translator at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for illegally carrying classified documents through Boston's Logan Airport, it would seem the military is having enough trouble confirming the loyalties of its own citizen soldiers.

Yet, Hatch and Feinstein would

like illegal aliens — those who have necessarily broken U.S. law — to serve equally alongside U.S. citizens as they then defend the laws they have broken. Military service is a product of citizenship, not a way to barter for it.

The DREAM Act would also repeal the federal prohibition on granting illegal aliens in-state tuition to public colleges. In other words, if one was from Mandeville, La., they would potentially have to pay almost twice as much as an illegal alien would to come to A&M.

"While I do not advocate granting unchecked amnesty to illegal immigrants," Hatch said, "I am in favor of providing children — children who did not make the decision to enter the United States illegally — the opportunity to earn the privilege of remaining here legally." By "earning" Hatch must mean "doing what you would normally do anyway."

Keep in mind, the bill requires little more from illegal aliens than what they have been doing — residing in the United States. It is the United States that has the

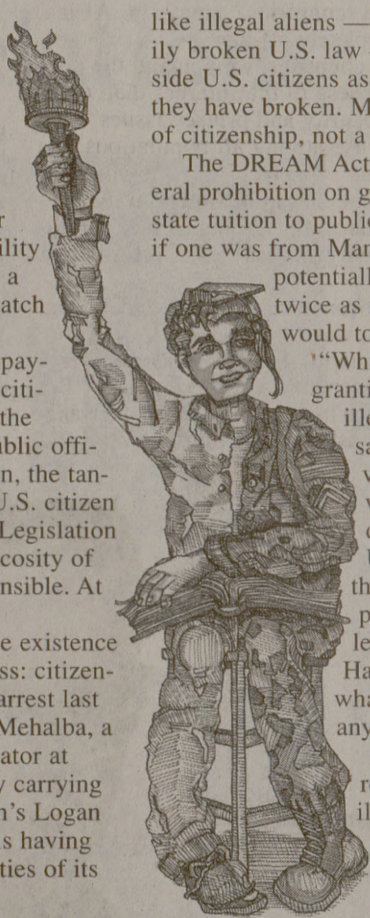
responsibility to grant citizenship. It's called homesteading and while it worked to build many states in this nation, it's a disservice to the idea of citizenship.

Instead of handing out citizenship, put the responsibility on immigrants. Perhaps, as Melissa Lazarin of the National Council of La Raza argues, "these young people were brought here by their parents, went to school here, speak English and consider this their country and essentially aren't able to demonstrate that."

Of course, the DREAM Act fails to mention any consequences imposed on the parents of the individuals who would take advantage of the legislation. Are they granted passive immunity from deportation? Probably — thus exponentially increasing the de facto effects of this legislation.

Nobody likes a bad dream. However, Hatch's dream is a bit too lucid for comfort. Perhaps a hard nudge and a perpetual caffeine drip would jar this dream from his mind and prevent similar ones from leaking onto the Senate floor. The DREAM Act is a nightmare. And, while the monster in the closet may not be real, this legislation is.

Michael Ward is a senior history major.



GRACIE ARENAS • THE BATTALION

## Biased media coverage causes misconception of Iraq war

Last spring, a Battalion columnist argued the then-nascent war in Iraq was theologically unsound. In the column, it was stated there was no reliable evidence of a link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida. The column resulted in e-mails from Aggies who disagreed with this fact, despite President George W. Bush telling reporters on Sept. 17, "We've had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved in 9-11," according to The Associated Press.



COLLINS EZEANYIM

Yet due to biased media coverage of the war, a frustrating number of Americans continue to believe Iraq was somehow involved in 9-11. To ensure that the American public is able to make well-informed opinions on such an important decision, news outlets must be upfront with their biases.

According to one study, titled "Misperceptions, The Media and The Iraq War," the reason why Americans are seemingly misinformed involves the popularity of the Fox News Network.

Released jointly by the Program on International Policy Attitudes and Knowledge Networks in early October, the report revealed those who use Fox as their primary news source were "more likely than average to have misperceptions."

One misperception the report focused on included the belief that there was solid evidence demonstrating an Iraq-al Qaida relationship. The report also focused on the mistaken beliefs many Americans had that weapons of mass destruction had been found in Iraq and that the majority of the world supported Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq. A staggering 80 percent of Fox viewers believed one of these misperceptions, and 45 percent believed all three.

On the other end of the spectrum, it was discovered that those who use PBS and NPR as their main news source were the least likely to believe these misperceptions. Only 23 percent believed one, and a barely noticeable 4 percent believed in all three.

It is no secret that Fox News is a conservative network. Anyone who analyzes the channel recognizes this. Being a conservative network is not necessarily a bad thing, but Fox executives need to admit they do lean to the right.

Real problems occur if one lets his ideological bias distort the way the news is reported. For example, some may argue that the demographics of the Fox audience will lead them to believe the stated misperceptions. But even when controlling for demographics and ideological bias, the PIPA/KN study showed people who used Fox as their main news source were likely to believe falsehoods about the Iraq war. In fact, the level of belief in misperceptions increased the more one watched Fox News.

This is truly frightening and does not bode well for the state of political discourse in the United States. Obviously, people will disagree over the interpretation of facts, but it is vital that they be the same set of facts.

When a huge influence such as Fox distorts the news to suit its agenda, the American public will base important decisions, such as whether a pre-emptive war is justified, based on an ideological bias.

Online magazine Salon.com recently ran an interview with

Charles Reina, who worked for six years at Fox as a producer, copy editor and writer. He claims a daily memo posted on the Fox computer system often contained instructions on how to slant the day's news to make it as pro-Bush as possible.

Anyone who still needs convincing that Fox has an agenda should consider the events of March 28, when the Fox News

Ticker on Sixth Avenue in Manhattan mocked war protesters. One message read "War protester auditions here today ... thanks for coming!" Another asked, "How do you keep a war protester in suspense? Ignore them."

So Fox has and has had a pro-war agenda. This is OK as long as it and others who supported the war based their reasoning on unbiased facts.

It is possible to deliver undisputable facts even if one's bias is known, which is why Fox News should admit its bias to the American public. For instance, freerepublic.com is "an online gathering place for independent, grassroots conservatism on the Web." Yet it often contains links to informative articles.

Salon.com's editors lean left, yet it is one of the better information sources on the Web and in

the past has given voice to conservative writers such as David Horowitz and Andrew Sullivan. This is a real example of being "fair and balanced." This is a mantra that Fox seemingly doesn't take seriously.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.

**"When a huge influence such as Fox distorts the news to suit its agenda, the American public will base important decisions, such as whether a pre-emptive war is justified, based on ideological bias."**

### MAIL CALL

#### Procedure is never medically necessary

In response to Jonathan Steed's Nov. 3 column:

I disagree with the fact that such a ban will jeopardize the health of women and control a woman's freedom of choice. This ban only prohibits 1 percent of abortions, leaving a large degree of freedom of choice to women. The poor victims of the "vicious attack on women's health choices" oppose the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act because they state a late term abortion ban without an exception to protect the life or health of the mother is unconstitutional. However, in the U.S. Supreme Court case Stenberg v. Carhart, it is made obvious that the risk to the health of the woman lies within the late term abortion procedure itself.

Evidence of the procedure being necessary and beneficial to women's health was not brought up. In fact, during this Supreme Court trial, the plaintiff did not produce one example or circumstance in which the use of the "dilation and extraction" was necessary to preserve the health of the woman. I think a ban on such a barbaric method of abortion will bring the medical procedure of pregnancy

termination far from clothes hangers in dark alleys and provide greater health protection to women.

Lindsay Patty  
Class of 2006

#### Each life is valuable and precious

As a teacher in special education, I have had the greatest privilege in getting to know a wide variety of children ranging from the gifted child to the most severely handicapped child.

Today's society places a greater value on the "perfect" life. Therefore, when many parents find that their baby will be born imperfect by these standards, they choose to eliminate the odds for their child altogether. Raising a child with a disability can often be draining, but the love that results cannot be compared to anything else. We do not know a child's potential unless we give that child a chance. Each life is precious and valuable in its own way.

Dilation and extraction is the abortion method used on the child "imperfect" by the world's standards. A doctor who performs abortions delivers the child's body breach. The child's undelivered skull is then pierced, and its brain is extracted. The child is

delivered dead.

It is such a waste. By condoning a practice such as this, we become a society incapable of seeing the beauty and perfection in each child, a child that could have more impact in the world than we could ever imagine possible.

Stephanie Bierschenk  
Class of 2003

#### Abortion is last resort in tough situations

In response to a Nov. 4 mail call:

I am pro-choice. Don't get me and the other pro-choice advocates wrong, though. We are not pushing abortion, but we are protecting an important right — a woman's right to reproductive freedom. We should all respect women enough to let them decide when and where they are capable of having a child.

Abortion is neither pretty nor desirable, but it is definitely not about choice. Abortion is a last resort used when, for a variety of reasons, a woman is not capable of bringing a child into a world that will be loving

and nurturing. When someone is placed in this tough situation, the last thing she needs is to be ostracized and judged.

If you really want to end abortions, try getting at the causes. We need to educate our youths about the dangers of unprotected sex, and we need to work to eliminate poverty so all potential mothers can give their children the means to live a fulfilling life. Sadly, the current anti-choice

administration cares about neither of these. Rather, they limit access to effective sex education and affordable birth control, and they continue to oppress our impoverished citizens. Meanwhile, demonstrators continue to harass women in the most difficult times of their lives.

Nick Anthis  
President, Texas Aggie Democrats  
Class of 2004

