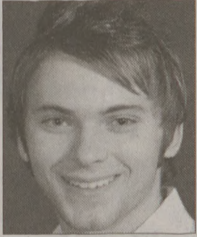


Inflated issue

Nationwide gasoline problem is overblown, but Democrats doing little to help

Years divisible by four always bring people a degree of certainty because some things during these years are a safe bet — like the month of February having 29 days and the Summer Olympics taking place somewhere in the world. And, coming with the arrival of the “first Tuesday after the first Monday in November,” is the election of the leader of the free world.



CLINT RAINEY

In this particular year, however, there are some other certainties. One is that the price of gasoline is certainly going to remain an abrasive election issue and another is that the Democrats and Bush-haters will try to make it out to be one of the worst travesties to ever befall this nation.

As usual, liberals, Democrats, the John Kerry campaign and much of the media are in cahoots. Seeing that some simple distortions could paint President Bush as fiscally inept with regard to the oil industry and environmentally unconscientious, they intend to punish the president with a one-two punch in hopes that it will knock the wind out of his campaign.

But before Aggies swear off petroleum, here are some facts concerning gasoline in this country that are good for separating liberal science fiction from the truth. This is the state of gasoline and oil and of the country right now. As the evidence shows, there is no Bush-made crisis.

The most basic and shocking fact is that gasoline prices are actually below where they should be historically. According to the Department of Energy, the historical median price of gasoline after inflation adjustment is \$2.05 per gallon. The current national average, without adjustment, is \$1.94 per gallon.

While political drama queens are busy whining about “exorbitant” gasoline prices, smart Americans are doing some simple research and math to understand the true situation. Gasoline prices are high — this fact is understood by most without the research or math — but, looking at history, they could be higher. Look at the Department of Energy statistics. Real gasoline prices, adjusted for inflation, consistently stayed above that average of \$2.05 per gallon until the mid-1950s, when they only averaged a few cents below \$2 per gallon. They jumped back up to record highs in the late 1970s. By 1980, the nominal cost per gallon was about \$1.10, which has a real price of about \$2.75 after adjustment, or

roughly 25 percent more than gasoline’s 85-year median price. Citizens should realize that despite these “exorbitant” prices, the cost is still less than what it should be when adjusted for inflation.

To liberals, however, prices are not only still outlandishly high, but the supplies of oil are outlandishly low. They say that “oil production is about to peak.” Is there truth to this? Possibly. Yet, true or not, it is the Republicans in office who seem to be trying to alleviate this problem, whether current, potential or nonexistent.

The recent defeat of the Energy Policy bill is a good case in point. The bill, which would have provided for environmentally safe drilling in Alaska, increased energy efficiency and improved air quality, was killed by the filibustering of thick-headed Democratic senators and the support of Senator “Flip-flop” Kerry, who despite casting his vote to kill it, has ironically attempted to hurl a few darts at the president on the topic of fuel irresponsibility. Unfortunately for the senator, high talk about fuel prices coming from the man who voted to raise the tax on gasoline, or about the importance of hugging trees coming from the ringleader behind the death of the Energy Policy bill, is vaguely reminiscent of Queen Gertrude’s ironic line from Hamlet, perhaps with a slight alteration: “Methinks the senator doth protest too much.”

America’s consumption of gasoline is often rumored to be at “dangerously high” levels. It is true that consumption is high, but the only thing dangerous is that the fuel cannot be refined as quickly as it is demanded, which could potentially create a shortage. Simple reason tells one that to have a product available, it must exist in greater quantities than it is used. For gasoline, this means refining the oil. But this creates a problem: America built its last refinery almost 30 years ago and, according to former Delaware Gov. Pete du Pont, this is the true problem that needs solving. He cites gasoline regulations as the creator of this predicament — regulations passed by the Democrat-controlled 101st Congress and supported by leading men such as Kerry.

But liberals have regulation all wrong. Regulations should make things such as car emissions cleaner, not allow the amount of available gasoline dwindle. Interestingly, the years of the Bush administration have seen some of the cleanest air ever. There are fewer pollutants in the air now than ever before. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the toxic or hazardous lead emissions from the use of gasoline in cars, factories and other motors have almost vanished; carbon monoxide and sulfur



dioxide are down by more than half and the ever-menacing “smog” is down by 18 percent. Technology has further decreased pollution through alternate fuel sources for automobiles.

Altogether, oil reserve estimates are up, gasoline prices are completely average over their 85-year history, technology has increased gas mileage and made alternate fuels a reality and pollution is down. The country’s only problems seem to be that Democrats do not vote for legislation that would help and do vote along partisan lines for legislation that will ultimately hurt the environment.

Together, these facts seem to suggest that America and its most important fuel source are doing alright, and not in the state of “crisis” that is purported by the left.

Ironically enough, liberals have spent years

espousing theories that higher gasoline prices are good because they mean greater conscientiousness about the environment and economy. But now that they are high, no one’s celebrating. Why?

It’s because the liberals realize that, using simple research and math, Americans have found an equation: A Democrat in office plus another Democrat in office equals more self-contradiction and hypocrisy. So, maybe instead of cutting back on gasoline consumption, Americans should focus on cutting back on the number of Democrats in office. Anyone interested in this can start on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Clint Rainey is a sophomore general studies major. Graphic by Rylie Deyoe

MAIL CALL

Column misrepresented actions, beliefs of YCT

In response to Nicholas Davis’ June 10 column:

By reading Mr. Davis’ recent column, it is obvious that he has done little (if any) research into the Young Conservatives of Texas. Our chapter at t.u. has indeed voiced opposition to a proposal that would impose a “multicultural” class requirement. Unlike Mr. Davis states, however, YCT has no problem at all with classes on other cultures and we certainly encourage students to take these classes and participate in programs such as study abroad.

What we do have a problem with, though, is when a university imposes such a requirement using a popular buzzword (such as “multicultural”) and uses this requirement to promote a political agenda. This is exactly what is happening at t.u.

Additionally, Mr. Davis’ misrepresentations of YCT activities last year are too numerous to explain in great detail. Our protest of Ted Kennedy was based upon our belief that he has been a poor public servant during his time in office, not due to his opposition to the war in Iraq. In fact, one of YCT’s favorite elected officials,

Congressman Ron Paul, has been very critical of the war.

As for claiming that YCT’s activities focus solely on race and politics, he is only partially correct. As a political organization, the activities of YCT will focus on political issues. Concerning race, all Mr. Davis needs to do is re-read his column and see several examples of YCT activities not related to race that he has listed.

We realize that as a vocal organization, there will always be people who disagree with our viewpoints or our methods. We encourage anybody, regardless of their political ideology, to stop by a YCT meeting or event to see what we are really about.

Mark McCaig
Class of 2005
student adviser,
Young Conservatives of Texas A&M

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 words or less and include the author’s name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to: 015 Reed McDonald, 1111 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 Email: mailcall@thebattalion.net

Health Science Center’s use of race discriminatory

In a landmark 2003 Supreme Court decision, race officially became an acceptable playing card for collegiate admissions policies. Although Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates chose to discount race as a determinant in admissions policies, the Health Science Center within the A&M System recently announced it will implement a race-based admissions policy, aiming to boost the low minority enrollment. Although this decision doesn’t apply to A&M, movements to diversify the student population through other methods are nevertheless in full force.

The term “diversity” is so overused on college campuses that its original intended meaning has been diluted to a catchphrase. This slogan has been drilled into college students’ minds across the country, conditioning them to believe that above all else, diversity on college campuses must be achieved.

There is a myth that diversity is about more than just race. Some organizations, even the promoters of diversity, concede that there are many aspects in which a population can be diverse other than race. They are even listed on A&M’s Web site — ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, socioeconomic background, religion, sexual orientation and disabilities.

But don’t believe it for a second. When university administrators say they are promoting “diversity,” they are only giving a politically correct name to racial profiling. No college bases admission on economic status, gender or religion. In fact, nothing that would constitute a measurement for diversity is used in admission procedures with the exception of race.

The reason behind race being selected as the ultimate trump card has never been explained and obviously isn’t of concern to these administrators. While it is an admirable goal to achieve a community in which people from all walks of life learn from each other, implementing a forced racial diversity will not necessarily translate into an open and understanding student body, but instead one bitterly divided by race-based lines that the administrators drew themselves when they gave some students unfair advantages over others.

It’s not only the practice of affirmative action within the actual application process, as is the case with the Health Science Center, but the relentless bending-over-backward of the regents and administrators who court minorities speci-



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cally for their skin color instead of academic benefits they may contribute to a learning environment. True diversity of not only socioeconomic status, religious beliefs and background, but also majors, cultures and political beliefs does superficially benefit the learning community. However, racial diversity should be the result of efforts to reach out to all interested applicants and not the other way around. Students who are singled out solely based on the color of their skin as desirable candidates for admission will not be blind to the obvious and concentrated effort that goes into recruiting them for nothing besides their race.

To get a clear perspective of how it is actually the administrators who are being discriminatory and not right-wing conservatives, imagine if the Health Science Center had decided that they would grant additional weight in the admissions policies toward those who practiced any religion other than Christianity, or anyone who was homosexual or from a foreign country. No matter what the category is, the act of the Health Science Center granting favor to one student over another for anything other than pure talent and academic capability in the aim of achieving nothing but better demographic figures is not only irrational, but an unfortunate reality.

If universities questioned applicants in all areas that one could possibly be diverse in, not only would the applications themselves be too long to read, but the administrators might be forced to face the certainty that each applicant is different from the other. While something as simple as skin color may guarantee that, racial diversity may come at the price of refusing to admit candidates who qualify on academics alone but happen to be part of the racial majority.

There is little chance of administrators and regents across the country and on this campus shifting their focus from the numbers of minorities enrolled to the quality of educational environment provided. The consequences of their actions will be shown in years to come, as a generation of students emulate universities’ examples of race-targeting recruiting and admission policies, which only serve to deepen racial barriers.

“When university administrators say they are promoting ‘diversity,’ they are only giving a politically correct name to racial profiling.”

Sara Foley is a senior journalism major.

