

# THE BATT

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The Indiana "Religious Freedom Bill" states that the government may not interfere with someone's right to exercise their religion unless it is proven that doing so is "essential."

Alli Bradshaw — THE BATTALION

## Right to discriminate?

### Indiana bill tests religious limits, concerns LGBT advocates

By Sam Scott

The decision by Indiana Gov. Mike Pence to sign the "Religious Freedom Bill" has led to concerns among LGBT advocates.

The law states that the government may not interfere with someone's right to exercise their religion unless it is proven that doing so is "essential to further a compelling governmental restriction," and does so in the least restrictive means possible.

According to a news release from the Indiana governor's office, the law is intended to ensure individuals have right to exercise their religion without government interference, but critics argue the law's wording invites discrimination by businesses against the LGBT community.

Meg Penrose, a professor at the Texas A&M School of Law, said possible examples include a jeweler who refuses to sell wedding rings to a gay couple, or a wedding photographer who leaves after realizing the marriage is for two women.

Penrose said arguments surrounding the law's discrimination stem from the broad language, which could extend the religious freedom to private businesses and corporations.

"So this law, from everything I'm able to tell, explicitly allows any for-profit business to assert that that business — not just the owners, but the business — has the right to the free exercise of religion," Penrose said.

Penrose said it's too early to tell if the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, RFRA, would actually discriminate against the LGBT community.

"Could it potentially result in legal discrimination? Yes, but I want to see how the law is enforced and how the law comes up in individual situations," Penrose said. "Certainly the language is broader than all other RFRA that I've read about, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it will be permitted to be enforced that broadly."

A similar federal RFRA was passed in 1993 during the Clinton administration, and a 1997 Supreme Court decision led several states to pass similar RFRA laws.

"Around 20 states have religious freedom restoration acts or similarities that mirror or try to resemble what was passed in 1993 during the Clinton administration, and a 1997 Supreme Court decision led several states to pass similar RFRA laws."

INDIANA ON PG. 2

BASEBALL

## Texas A&M remains at top of polls

### A&M looks to maintain ranking against Sam Houston State Tuesday



Kathryn Perez — THE BATTALION

Nick Banks rounds third after his second homer of the season Saturday.

By Andre Perrard

According to a pair of national polls, Texas A&M has the best baseball team in the country.

In the Collegiate Baseball and USA Today polls, released Monday, A&M ranked No. 1. After taking hold of the SEC with a series win over Missouri, A&M will look to continue its hot play Tuesday afternoon against the Sam Houston State Bearkats.

The Bearkats (13-16) most recently suffered a series loss to Central Arkansas on the road. On offense, they are led by Spence Rahm, who has 27 RBIs on the year and five home runs to his name. He is also hitting .347, the highest average on the team. They also have four batters in the lineup that are hitting better than .300.

The Aggies (27-2, 7-2 SEC) recently captured their series against the Tigers with a 14-run outburst on Sunday afternoon. A&M has a powerful lineup, led in RBIs by Mitchell Nau (25) and home runs by Logan Taylor (six). Five Aggie hitters have more than 20 RBIs.

Nick Banks is also hitting .429 on the season. Six Aggie players have averages that are above the .300 mark on the season. As a team, the Aggies are No. 10 in the country in team batting average, hitting .311 as a unit.

On the mound, freshman Turner Larkins will most likely make the start for Texas A&M. Larkins has made seven starts this year, earning a 3-1 record. He has a 2.94 ERA with 32 strikeouts. A&M leads the nation in team ERA at 1.76. The Bearkats will most likely send Dylan Ebbs to the mound.

The Aggies and Bearkats last played each other in 2014. The Aggies and Bearkats split two games during the 2014 campaign, with SHSU winning 8-1 in the first meeting and A&M winning 3-1 in the final meeting.

First pitch is scheduled for 6:35 p.m. Tuesday night at Olsen Field.

URBAN PLANNING

## A&M joins natural disaster preparedness initiative

By Lenae Allen

Texas A&M urban planning researchers formed a new initiative with scientists from 10 other universities earlier this month to help communities prepare for and recover from natural disasters.

The headquarters of the coalition, the Community Resilience Center of Excellence, is based at Colorado State University, and was established via the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology. The alliance between the 10 universities and the CRCE won a \$20 million grant through NIST and hopes to provide five years of data on how best to build and protect societies from disasters.

Although Colorado is centrally located in the United States, the universities involved are spread across the country to maximize the reach of the research. Other universities — such as Rice University, the University of Oklahoma and Texas A&M University-Kingsville — are contributing to the research to help create resilient communities through their own models of information.

At its conclusion, the study hopes to provide policymakers with models for implementing safer building regulations, said Walter Peacock, director of the Texas A&M Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center and a member of the research team.

"For those of us in planning, we can incorporate our research in terms of the nature of policy — how quickly it's implemented — as well as how we organize ourselves to deal with recovery efforts to see improvements to a community's resilience," Peacock said.

Peacock said the team of researchers wants to measure community resiliency, or how well communities are able

DISASTER ON PG. 3

SERVICE

## Aggie celebrates birthday with 'Happy Toes' project



Alex Dempsey, class of 2014, hopes to collect 2,300 pairs of socks to donate to a homeless shelter in San Antonio.

PROVIDED

Former student raises awareness for homeless in San Antonio

By Victoria Rivas

When thinking of birthdays, things like piñatas and party streamers might come to mind. But for her 23rd birthday, Alex Dempsey, Class of 2014, has something a little bit different on her wish list — socks.

2,300 pairs, to be exact. Dempsey, a marketing coordinator for Chick-fil-A in San Antonio, hopes to collect donations of 2,300 pairs of socks to donate to San Antonio's chronically homeless population through an operation she has named "Happy Toes."

Dempsey is working with the support of Chick-fil-A as well as two organizations in San Antonio that work to serve the homeless population: St. Vincent De Paul and Haven for Hope.

This will be Dempsey's third annual birthday donation project. Her first project was in honor of her 21st birthday.

"I was born on April 21 and was turning 21," Dempsey said. "All of my friends kept saying, 'Oh that's your golden birthday, where you go all out and it's the best birthday ever.' I was buying into it. I thought I was going to have this huge party, and then I thought I wanted to celebrate

HAPPY TOES ON PG. 3

Q&A

## Researcher works toward 'smart' chemotherapy

Sam Scott, Battalion news reporter, sits down with Lin Zhu, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, to discuss his work with developing nanotechnology to improve cancer treatments.

**THE BATTALION:** You and your team are researching how to minimize the side effects of cancer treatments such as chemotherapy. How could this be possible?

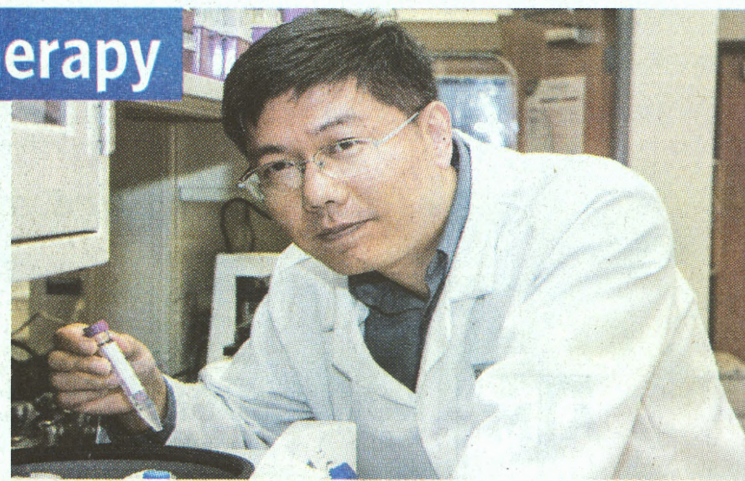
ZHU: Currently, the chemotherapy is one of the most effective options for managing various types of cancer. Chemotherapy drugs are usually toxic chemicals and designed to kill cancer cells. Unfortunately, they are not "smart" enough to recognize their target — the cancer cells. The

healthy cells are unavoidably damaged by these anti-cancer drugs. One of our research goals is to design the "smart" drug delivery carriers to help these toxic drugs to find and kill only the cancer cells without or with less toxicity to other types of cells in the body.

**THE BATTALION:** How can you design chemotherapy to only go after the cancerous cells?

ZHU: We have known that cancerous cells [and] tissues had certain unique characteristics compared to normal cells [and] tissues, such as the up-regulated proteins, acidic microenvironment, low oxygen concentration,

ZHU ON PG. 2



PROVIDED

Lin Zhu, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, works with developing nanotechnology to improve cancer treatments.