

# VIEWPOINTS



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## USC VOICES

### What do you think about the anti-gay fliers?



"It's not up to us to tell gay people what they should do. We are not God, and we should not judge them."

**Shawnee Peoples**  
Political science freshman



"I think they're totally wrong. What's not right for someone else doesn't mean it's not right for another person."

**Samantha Burton**  
Education freshman



"I don't think that any kind of discrimination should be tolerated because of the negative impact that it has had on our campus and country."

**Antonio Elliott**  
Accounting senior



"I read in the paper that [Dennis Pruitt] had to decide if the fliers were opinion or a threat. When someone incites violence, that's not an opinion."

**Norman Hayes**  
Political science sophomore

## Hatred

### Group uses Christianity to mask hatred while threatening USC's cultural progress

In Gatlinburg, Tenn., a store called God's Country displays religious paraphernalia, particularly patriotic T-shirts adorned with drawings of eagles, American flags and crosses uplifted to a blazing sky. In bold black letters, the shirt asks, "What is happening to America?" This is followed by a list of about 10 evils plaguing our country.

The list of problems includes homosexuality as well as racism. The dim outlook on America's future by the shirt's designer makes it easy to pass off the shirt's message as a figment of some religious nut's imagination. Despite one's religious beliefs, however, the principles behind American life come into question.

People are often afraid of religious commentary such as the shirt because it seems judgmental or irrational. But compare the shirt's statement to the one made by the anti-gay fliers posted on campus a few days ago.

Likening homosexuals to child molesters is a common ploy to send fear surging through moral veins. The call for violence is explicit and not founded on religion, but hatred. With so many tainted messages, the confusion comes in pinpointing exactly who opposes homosexuals and why.

Homosexuals argue the discrimination and hatred they battle parallels the historic plight of the black race or any other minority. However, the aforementioned shirt presents the moral condemnation of homosexuality, distinctly calling it a sin.

The shirt poses an honest question about our country, though its content doesn't take into account that homosexuals collectively encounter the same sinister forces that kept blacks and women from freedom for years. These forces are not, as groups such as the S.C. Christian Alliance would have us believe, of true Christian principle.

Some use religious principles to distinguish right from wrong; others use codes not founded in any religious group. Sin and morality, right and wrong, black and white are truly in the eye of the beholder. And behold, there is no room for cries of "execution-castration-imprisonment" of a group of people simply because they are different from someone else. Not on the USC campus.

Even more foreboding than the call for termination of gays is the disguise donned by the criers. The S.C. Christian Alliance blatantly misuses Christianity to mask its apparent goal of possibly committing violent hate crimes.

These threats should be taken as no less than dangerous to the USC community. In a sense, we are uncertain of the motivation within the hearts of the perpetrators of such threats. But one thing is certain: Their Christian images or terms such as "holy war" tell nothing of what lurks beneath the mask.

There is no excuse for inciting violence. To counteract this, the USC campus must continue to uphold its principles of cultural diversity and tolerance, evidences of our progress in an advanced society and proof of our appreciation for all types of people.

## Master Minds-

### Punishment disguised as discipline breeds violence

*"The worst thing seems to be for schools to work with methods of fear, force and artificial authority. Such treatment destroys the healthy feelings, the integrity and the self-confidence of pupils."*

Albert Einstein

Social workers have a fundamental commitment to vulnerable populations. Among the disenfranchised, the powerless and the underrepresented people in our society, the welfare of children subjected to corporal punishment in the schools is crucial.

The United States invests millions of dollars each year to prevent child abuse, yet we allow the injury of children by school personnel in the name of discipline. In case of injury inflicted by parents in the home, a report to protective service initiates a process designed to protect the child from further assault. No such procedure exists to protect children who are injured by teachers or other school officials.

So what is corporal punishment as it is practiced? Despite some districts' policies governing corporal punishment - 23 states and the District of Columbia have already banned it - abuses are not uncommon. Punishments take the form of paddling, hitting children with rulers, yardsticks, pointers, belts, ropes, rattan sticks, broomsticks, rubber hoses, baseball bats, metal pipes and brass knuckles.

Children are slapped, shoved, kicked and thrown against walls, desks and concrete pillars. Documented cases also describe children being stuck with pins, shocked with cattle prods and



**Deborah Valentine**

electrostatic generators and burned.

One S.C. boy nearly died when he was paddled by an administrator who correctly followed all precautionary guidelines. Nevertheless, the boy suffered a life-threatening asthma attack and was hospitalized for seven days. Another student was paddled on 56 occasions during a two-month period.

Across the board, more than 1 million incidents of corporal punishment occur in U.S. schools each year with 10,000 incidents requiring medical attention. S.C.'s public school systems rank ninth in the nation for percentage of children hit. This translates into more than 30,000 school children who will be physically punished this year.

Corporal punishment is not a sound educational practice. It has limited and temporary effectiveness. The child most likely to be corporally punished is the child least likely to learn from corporal punishment: the child with hyperactivity, organic brain damage, learning disabilities or the angry stoic children.

The child most likely to receive corporal punishment in the school often receives excessive corporal punishment at home or in other settings. There are well-documented consequences

of corporal punishment, including permanent injury such as welts, bruises, broken bones, hemorrhaging, hearing loss, nerve damage, ruptured bladders and even death.

The use of physical force to control behavior teaches children lessons that we do not want them to learn. Force is not the way to resolve conflict. It erodes the child's self esteem. Furthermore, corporal punishment is associated with lower grades, higher rates of truancy and higher drop-out rates. The 10 states with the highest rates of corporal punishment, including South Carolina, have academic test scores below the national average.

A frequent justification for the legal sanctioning of corporal punishment is that teachers and other educational personnel require it for self-protection. Undeniably, violence in school is increasing. Teaching children to empathize, make good decisions, understand the consequences of their behavior and assert themselves appropriately reduces all forms of violence in our schools. Techniques such as time-out, in-school suspension and creative incentives for pro-social behavior have been used effectively.

South Carolinians should join the National Association of Social Workers and the National Parent-Teacher Association in advocating the abolishment of corporal punishment in our schools. In its place should be effective discipline that teaches that conflict can be resolved with reason and intellect, not violence.

Deborah Valentine is an associate professor in the College of Social Work.

## Two out of three could help Clinton in '96 election

Eight months into his presidency, Bill Clinton has already had an interesting, if not totally exciting, term in office.

Marked by triumphs such as his budget bill squeaking by both houses and tragedies such as the suicide of a top aide, the Clinton administration has been through its ups and downs.

The youth and energy that attracted many voters to candidate Clinton turned off these voters after a number of public relations blunders.

Clinton's attempt to lift the ban on gays in the military sparked an outcry from much of the country, especially the military brass. And the "don't ask, don't tell" system, which was eventually adopted by Clinton and the military, satisfied no one. Neither the gay community nor the military were pleased with the result, and Clinton knows it.

Because of these incidents and others, it is not surprising that Clinton's national approval rating has been in the 40 percent to 50 percent range for months. And in South Carolina, it is surely much lower.

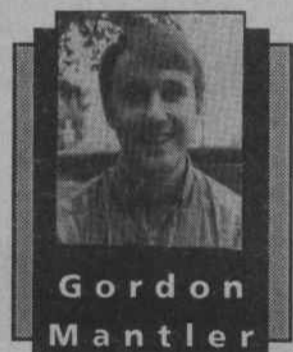
Clinton hasn't seen anything yet.

This fall, Congress is expected to tackle three key pieces of legislation: a government reform bill streamlining the federal bureaucracy, the North American Free Trade Agreement and health care reform.

The passage of at least one or two of these bills is essential to Clinton's chance of being president through the year 2000.

The news of a Middle East peace agreement is an excellent way to start the Clinton administration's first autumn.

However, the agreement on Palestinian self-rule between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel is more the individual states' doing than Clinton's or Secretary of State Warren Christopher's.



**Gordon Mantler**

Whatever the case, the agreement is a positive development in Clinton's foreign policy and one that might boost his sagging approval rating. And Clinton will need all the help he can muster for the congressional fights ahead.

If passed, the initiatives could have a comparable influence to President Roosevelt's New Deal programs of the '30s.

Most officials expect Al Gore's government streamlining plan, which could radically alter the way government does business, to be the first issue tackled by Congress. And there's a decent chance that it will pass.

This will set up the wars over NAFTA and health care, which the interest groups and lobbyists are anxiously waiting to do battle over.

Wannabe despot Ross Perot is getting back into the act by spreading his anti-NAFTA propaganda to the ignorant masses, including S.C.'s textiles industry, in hopes of defeating the landmark agreement.

This fall's initiatives are the key to the success of not only Bill Clinton and the Democratic party but for the entire United States.

Republicans might tell you otherwise. But a successful Bill Clinton will mean a healthier, fairer and efficient America, and that's a fact.

Gordon Mantler is university editor of The Gamecock. His column appears every other Wednesday.

## Anti-crime legislation might put protesters in jail

Congress is about to pass a major piece of anti-crime legislation. I am referring to Senate Bill 636, which will impose tougher sanctions on those convicted of blockading abortion clinics. Under the proposed law, first-time protesters will receive a year in jail and fines totaling up to \$150,000.

Several people, including lawyers at the American Civil Liberties Union, have questioned whether the penalties might be a bit steep. After all, the freedom to assemble peacefully is protected by the First Amendment. A year in prison is too much to impose on political protests, especially considering that the average convicted criminal usually gets sprung from jail before he has time to order a pizza.

In her testimony supporting the bill, Attorney General Janet Reno noted the increase in violence among pro-life protesters and explained that imprisonment "appears necessary to deter and punish unlawful conduct, as well as simply to incapacitate some of the more willful and persistent violators."

I would certainly like to offer my support for the bill. But I also agree with Indiana Senator



**Patrick McNeill**

Dan Coats, who believes that all violent protest movements should be equally punished. After all, it would be unfair to specifically target one unpopular group while sparing others.

I have worked up a formula to help legislators and law enforcement officials:

One person has been killed in anti-abortion protests over the past two years. Therefore, anti-abortion protesters receive one year in jail and a \$150,000 fine per offense.

At least one person has been killed by white supremacists in the past two years. Pro-Klan protesters should also get one year in jail and a \$150,000 fine per offense.

A man was killed earlier this year during a protest of U.S. immigration policies regarding

India. Actually, he killed himself, but violence IS violence. Immigration protesters should also get one year in jail and a \$150,000 per offense.

Two people were killed earlier this year during an Indian reservation protest for the legalization of casino gambling. Pro-gambling protesters should get TWO years in jail plus \$300,000 in fines for the increased risk of their demonstrations. This might put a damper on the efforts to get a lottery in South Carolina.

Finally, more than 50 people were killed in Los Angeles by protesters who were upset about the violation of Rodney King's civil rights. Therefore, because of the inherent violence of civil rights protesters, a first offense will get 50 years in jail and \$7.5 million in fines.

I realize this will make it more difficult for people to exercise their First Amendment rights, but as our Attorney General has explained, it's all for a good cause. And if you ever DO want to see a political protest in America, you can always visit a jail.

Patrick McNeill is a columnist for The Gamecock.

## LETTERS

### Message of fliers one step closer to fascism

To the editor:

I am writing concerning the story in Monday's issue of The Gamecock about the anti-gay fliers.

I am more than concerned. I am frightened for the well-being of my friends and loved ones.

The fundamentalist far right has gone too far. They have crossed the line to fascism.

For those of you who do not know what fascism is, it is what Hitler and the Nazis were. And this is exactly how the Nazi purges in Europe started calls for violence against minorities.

I assure you, I have not gone off the deep end. Sadly, this hatred is all too real. If you are not familiar with Hitler and the Nazis, grab a history book, or better yet, go over and view the Movietone News reels on campus and see what hatred and fear of those who are different can and did do.

These fundamentalist fascists are in Christian dress, and they are dangerous.

They have killed pro-choice doctors.

They have called for the death of gays.

Who will be next on their agenda of hate? Anyone of a different religion, anyone who has sex outside of marriage?

Are you next?

Melinda Hewlett  
Women's studies graduate

## Letters Policy

The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 200-250 words and must include full name, professional title or year and major if a student. Letters must be personally delivered by author to The Gamecock newsroom in Russell House room 321. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld under any circumstances.

**'I'M NOT VOTING ANY MORE TAXES FOR EDUCATION— WE NEED TO SAVE SOCIETY BY BUILDING MORE PRISONS!'**



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