

Viewpoints



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Privacy

Legalization of marijuana a property issue in accordance with Declaration, Bill of Rights

Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders broached the subject after a Dec. 7 speech to the National Press Club. Nobel laureate Milton Friedman agrees. So does former Secretary of State George Schultz. Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke called for a national debate on the subject in 1988. Columnist William F. Buckley said it should be considered. The majority of The Gamecock editorial board concurs.

The time has come for a rational discussion on the merits of legalizing drugs, specifically marijuana. This is no longer a taboo subject whose proponents possess a leftist and subversive ideology. Witness the above individuals: Schmoke is a mainstream liberal Democrat, and Friedman is an economist noted for his classical liberal beliefs. And we, by no means, operate on the same wavelength.

Supporters of marijuana legalization come to the subject from different perspectives. Some say it's a wasted effort to try to keep drugs from being imported into the country. Some claim illegal drugs lead to gang warfare and random violence. Some argue that misguided drug laws cause our prisons to be overpopulated, thereby costing taxpayers more and more money for new prisons and guards.

The above arguments are correct. But they miss the most crucial reasons for legalization: the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. As Steven Duke and Albert Gross write in the February issue of Reason magazine, the signers of the Declaration believed that "the right of property was fundamental, inalienable, an aspect of humanity."

James Madison, who wrote the Bill of Rights, recognized our rights to be left alone and protected from unreasonable searches, among others. These 10 additions to the Constitution were to ensure that individuals and states could not be harassed by a tyrannical federal government.

Unfortunately, these protections from the federal government have fallen by the wayside, and state governments also have become the monsters that Madison warned us of.

The proper argument for marijuana legalization is strictly a classical liberal theory. Thank goodness there are still individuals such as Milton Friedman who understand this. Legalization involves privacy, and it most definitely is a property issue.

Modern liberals, many of whom are ACLU members and privacy supporters, are often off by half; they don't understand that our society is nothing without being able to own, sell and trade property, which marijuana most certainly is. What good is communal privacy?

Under legalization, there will still be property (and other) laws: Theft of private property will still be prohibited. There will still be statewide DUI laws. There will probably still be bans against smoking in many public areas. Also, some members of the editorial board see legalization as a tax opportunity.

We would like to see outlets that sell marijuana along the line of ABC stores that sell alcohol. As with alcohol and cigarettes, people should be at least 18 before being allowed to buy marijuana. Scare tactics that suggest underage individuals could buy marijuana at any corner store are just that: scare tactics.

Don't let reactionary arguments shape your legalization opinion. The above arguments are also valid for allowing citizens to burn the flag and possess firearms. Don't bastardize the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.

Being a fairweather friend of these two documents, two of the few in the history of mankind that have set people free, is doing an injustice to the foundations that this country is founded on.



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Quote, Unquote

"I believe Columbia needs more people doing service, and it needs to bring young people together. The many needs of Columbia should be filled, and our young people can do it."

Marie-Louise Ramsdale

USC alumnus and director of the Southeast region of City Year

Christian right-wingers should preach love, tolerance

When "The Last Temptation of Christ" was released, it caused quite an uproar all over the nation, especially in South Carolina, the heart of the Bible Belt.

Critics, mostly religious right-wingers, of the movie said it was blasphemous because it showed Jesus having sex with a prostitute, leading a secular life and going against God's assignment for His life.

Most of the critics, interestingly, had not viewed the movie before making their condemnation. They were simply going off of what they had heard, not what they had experienced themselves.

Unfortunately, that judgmental attitude is a trend among many conservative Christians. I am not at all saying that any Christian who happens to be more traditional or fundamental in their beliefs has this attitude. I am also not implying that only right-wing Christians have this attitude.

As a Christian, and one who has participated in many activities with the Southern Baptists, one of the more well-known and vocal conservative denominations, I have become conscious of the stereotype we have been given.

Because the more conservative Christians are also the most vocal in many parts of our state, their image has projected onto the image of Christians in general. That projection can be positive when the right-wing groups advocate such issues as more responsibility in the home for education and an end to violence in society.

But when the conservatives start crusading for sex ed-



Wendy Hudson

NEWS EDITOR

ucation materials in schools that give abstinence as the only "acceptable" form of birth control and do not adequately supply information on the other forms, the image becomes tarnished.

Their crusades against and intolerance of abortion, evolution and homosexuality have given them, in many cases falsely, the impression that they are uneducated and closed-off to new ideas.

It is well within their religious freedom and moral obligation to campaign for the causes they believe in. But it is not within their moral obligation to condemn others for practicing or believing in those causes that the conservatives do not think are "Christian."

I recently saw a cartoon that had Uncle Sam talking to the wise man on the mountaintop. He said, "The Christian right hates so much, how can they be called Christians?" The wise man responds "Or right?"

The cartoon has a glimmer of truth to it. The Christian conservatives have damaged their own cause by their in-

tolerance, their misleading facts and their unwillingness to see an issue from another angle. They may preach love and forgiveness, but only to those who give in to and subscribe to their beliefs.

In addition, they are giving the other more liberal Christians a bad name. Some right-wingers even discriminate among denominations, deeming a more liberal denomination not "Christian" enough because they do not hold some of the same doctrinal beliefs.

The uproar over "The Last Temptation" is just one in a long series of examples where the Christian right showed their lack of research. If they had read the original book by Nikos Kazantzakis or seen the movie in its entirety, they would have realized that the last temptor is actually Satan showing Jesus what His life would have been like if he had chosen the secular route. In the end, Jesus chooses to die on the cross.

The point of tolerance and the point of the movie are similar. In the movie, it does not matter what the temptor was; Jesus chose to follow the path God wanted him to. The movie and the Biblical narrative end the same. Right-wing Christians should also choose to resist the temptation and follow the life God set out for them: a life filled with love and tolerance, not judging those who are different or who hold different beliefs.

Actions speak louder than words, even if they're words from Jesus.

Letters

'Last Temptation' not insulting, offensive

To the editor:

A Mr. Wyman Richardson has written to your paper objecting to the film "The Last Temptation of Christ" being shown at the Russell House Theater. It seems to me that a university setting would be an entirely appropriate place to present controversial or even objectionable movies, but that isn't why I'm writing this letter. I merely want to clear up a factual matter dealing with the film's contents.

"The Last Temptation of Christ" doesn't contain any scene in which Jesus Christ is depicted having sex with a prostitute. Anyone who has seen the film wouldn't have this misconception. What the film does depict is this: Jesus is being crucified. He is about to die. Satan, realizing this, tries one more temptation of Christ. Disguised as an angel, he attempts to deceive Jesus into giving up His redemptive death and living His life out as an ordinary man.

Jesus experiences a vision in which He sees what that would be like. This includes a variety of scenes in which Jesus is shown living the life of a more or less typical family man. This does include a brief and non-explicit scene where He is apparently hav-

ing sex with His wife, Mary Magdalene, who, according to the film, had once been a prostitute but later became a follower of Jesus. Ultimately, the deception fails, and Christ fulfills his mission on the cross.

Do the contents of this film present any conflicts with standard Christian theology? Of course. Is it offensive or insulting in its presentation? No. What is offensive is the way special interest groups have misrepresented this motion picture to the public. I think Mr. Richardson was probably misled by one or more of these religious charlatans.

Harry P. Collins
USC alumnus

Georgia battle flag not symbol of hate

To the editor:

I am writing in response to Mr. Wagenheim's recent article on the Confederate battle flag in Georgia, specifically its alleged tremendous negative effect on the Super Bowl. I'm a native Georgian, and I live about 20 miles south of Atlanta.

Because of Mr. Wagenheim's erroneous assumptions, it's obvious that someone from the great state of Georgia who knows

the facts and understands the situation needs to respond. However, in doing so, allow me to inform you, Mr. Wagenheim, that before you try to write again, you need to get the story straight.

First and foremost, I would like to dispel the widespread notion that the Confederate flag is a racist symbol. It isn't. It's a symbol of the proud heritage of the people of the United States. Furthermore, during the Civil War, the North also had slaves. Thus, in your crusade against the Confederate flag, you should also cry out, as a true bleeding liberal would, to bring down the flag of the United States.

That, however, would be a slap in the face of this great nation, just as it was a slap in the face when those African-American journalists walked out of the Georgia Dome press box during the national anthem. That wasn't "Georgia on My Mind" they walked out on. That was the national anthem of the United States. I don't think I need to say anymore.

Mr. Wagenheim also makes the assumption that the legislators of Georgia in 1956 were a bunch of racist "good ole boys." Let me assure you, Mr. Wagenheim, that it was a bipartisan, bicameral system just like it is now, and those legislators who still remain from that time period, as well as the man who designed the flag,

have stated time and time again that they didn't have racist intentions when they created and instated the Georgia flag.

Regardless of what happened in 1956, today in Georgia, 75 percent of the state supports the flag as it is. Gov. Miller gave up the right to bring down the flag a year ago, not because he's a chicken, but because in a democratic society he couldn't win that fight.

Mr. Wagenheim, you're the one who said you didn't want to cover the issue of the Confederate flag in South Carolina because you were afraid you might lose some friends. Take a good look in the mirror before you call someone else chicken. Aside from that, we in the state of Georgia have things more important to deal with than the piece of cloth that flies above our Capitol. That can be dealt with when all of our other problems have been solved.

As for those who would protest, I say to you to "have at it." Exercise your rights to the fullest. However, in a democratic society, the majority rules. Though your voices are loud, your numbers are small. There is a much larger silent majority.

Matt McCord
Music junior

Welfare reform will add expense to current system

The new buzzword in Washington is "crisis." No problem in America is worth solving these days unless it has mushroomed into crisis proportions. The latest crisis involves our welfare system, which the president discussed during his State of the Union infomercial.

Right now, the welfare system in America is a lot like the tenure policy for Clemson professors when I went there: The less one accomplishes, the more money and security one obtains. The president has proposed a plan "to end welfare as we know it" and force millions of able-bodied welfare recipients to work for a living.

But something mysterious happened to welfare reform this past week. Word leaked out from the Department of Health and Human Services that it would cost taxpayers up to \$20 billion a year more to reform welfare than to keep the current system.

You're probably wondering why doing away with welfare is so expensive. I wondered that, too, but a USA Today article clearly explained the reasons this past week. When the administration sat down to work out the details of its plan, an astute assistant raised the possibility that there might be poor, unemployed people in America even after Clinton's plan is enacted.

Because this is clearly unacceptable, the administration decided that under the new plan, every American must be guaranteed a job. If someone can't find work within two years, he will be automatically hired by the government and paid minimum wage. According to internal HHS estimates, this program will create 2 million new positions in the exciting fields of ditch-digging, construction and highway maintenance.

The president will face much criticism for this plan, and it isn't difficult to understand why. This jobs program is reminiscent of the WPA during the Great Depression, which helped start America's large national debt and failed to fix the economy.

Employees with guaranteed jobs will probably not be motivated to build bridges that stand up to California af-



Patrick McNeill

COLUMNIST

tershocks. Also, if the government undertakes construction projects on its own, private businesses will have less to do and be forced to lay off their workers.

I have pondered this situation and decided there must be a better way. Certainly, there is some government that is expanding and in need of new employees. There are tasks available that are more fulfilling and motivating than laying asphalt for \$4.50 an hour while humming "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." (I know this from personal summer job experiences.)

Then, I chanced upon a description of Mrs. Clinton's proposed health care system. It will require the formation of a new National Health Board, a countless number of state-level bureaucracies, regional health care alliances to negotiate with the health care providers and administrators for the new health plans. What a perfect solution for our problems!

Hillary can save money on her health care plan, because she will have cheap labor to fill the positions. The HHS people won't have to set up 2 million makeshift jobs. The new health care overseers will definitely have the incentive to perform their duties well, because if they screw up, they will have to forego their own health insurance.

And didn't our president say in his speech that nothing could be worse than the health care system we have now?

Patrick McNeill's column appears every Monday.

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Voices

Should marijuana be legalized?

"Yes. Marijuana usage harms no one, and the only reason there's anything like bad from it is because there's laws against it that forces it into the black market."

Michael McLellan
English sophomore

"No. It's a drug just like anything else."

Danelle Featherstone
Undecided junior

"Yeah, it should. I think it's not as dangerous as most people make it out to be."

Whitney Clark
Biology freshman

"No. I don't really think it should be legalized, but I don't really have an opinion on it yet."

Tracy Rogers
Biology junior