

# Viewpoints



J.T. Wagenheim, Editor in Chief • Lee Clontz, Viewpoints Editor  
**Editorial Board**  
 Wendy Hudson, Carson Henderson, Gordon Mantler,  
 Nancy Salomonsky, Tony Santori

## Burden

*Clinton plan to tax welfare benefits creates more waste in already inefficient system*

The Clinton administration is reportedly considering a plan to help finance the president's welfare reforms by taxing food stamps, welfare benefits and housing subsidies.

Realizing Clinton desperately needs to cut spending in the 1995 budget, this proposal seems to counter the entire purpose of welfare.

Presumably, one needs to be on welfare because he isn't making enough money to get through the month and therefore needs government assistance.

Luckily, most people who genuinely need financial assistance can qualify for food stamps or welfare payments.

The system has been highly criticized for being a burden to the American taxpayer and for offering incentives to single women with multiple children. This, some argue, encourages the poor to remain unmarried.

This new proposal, while generating revenue for the federal government, would unjustly burden those who can handle it the least, the destitute.

The new revenue would be used to expand work and job training programs, but at what cost? Certainly, there are those who would benefit, but a great number of people living on the edge of total poverty would be needlessly overburdened.

Aside from the undue burden on welfare recipients, taxing welfare checks is perhaps the most inefficient way possible to generate the needed money. The government gives people money, then asks for it back.

The alternative, cutting welfare benefits, also isn't the answer. People on welfare need some financial help, usually temporarily, and putting poor people on the street won't help the situation.

What the government does need to do is reform the welfare system, but without hurting the people the system seeks to help. With some manner of health care reform soon to come, the welfare system needs a new focus.

People must be encouraged to get off welfare, not to remain on it. By penalizing people for being married or having no children, the system only perpetuates its own problems.

People on welfare receive it for a reason: They are poor. Taking away their benefits in the name of reform is simply not the answer.

By putting forth a concerted effort to give people the incentive to pull themselves out of the welfare mire, the government will be doing both itself and the American people the greatest service.

## Casino gambling in S.C. money, not moral, issue

Jasper County Councilman Danny McKenzie hit the nail on the head when he recently shared his opinion on casino gambling: "If it's not morally wrong in Mississippi, I don't see why it would be morally wrong in South Carolina."

Several S.C. cities, including Columbia, are giving the idea a closer look as lawmakers search desperately for ways to clear a cloudy economy. One problem holding them back is a six-letter word that always seems to spring up in the Bible Belt: morals.

Gambling should never be considered a moral issue. People can spend their money as they please. This is an economic issue, one of individual rights and one that more and more states are putting their "morals" aside to accommodate.

South Carolina allows activities that a consensus would probably consider much more immoral than regulated casino gambling. A surplus of topless bars inhabit the Columbia area, while video poker parlors aren't an oddity on neighborhood street corners.

To say casino gambling is immoral would make a hypocrite of any South Carolinian who has no problem with video poker and nudie bars.

Gambling as an economic issue appears much more sound and coherent. Everyone complains about high taxes and no jobs. Big casinos tend to need a lot of local people to help run them — everything from parking attendants to housekeepers to blackjack dealers. The government would collect a hefty sum in taxes from casino owners, money that could help lower the average Joe's property taxes.

Then there's the issue of economic development. Columbia's previous dreams of making some money from people other than its own were shattered by a certain athletics director who thought a season of NFL games would hurt Gamecock football. That was only about \$40



J.T. Wagenheim  
 EDITOR'S NOTE

million flushed down the toilet.

Now, there's a chance to bring people to Columbia again. The zoo and the State Museum are great, but after a few trips to each, outsiders want bigger and better things. A casino would attract people from Atlanta, Charlotte, the Upstate, the Lowcountry and maybe as far south as Florida. Of course, these tourists, who will need places to shop, sleep and eat, will boost Columbia's restaurants and hotels.

Where to build it though. After a century and a quarter of being the state's most violent prison, CCI has relocated its last inmates, leaving some attractive riverfront property on the Congaree.

This location would be ideal: It's right off the interstate, close enough to Five Points and the downtown area and a few miles from Williams-Brice. Those Golden Spur Gamecock Club members would now come to town in their Winnebagos Thursday or Friday night to play some roulette or craps before a football game.

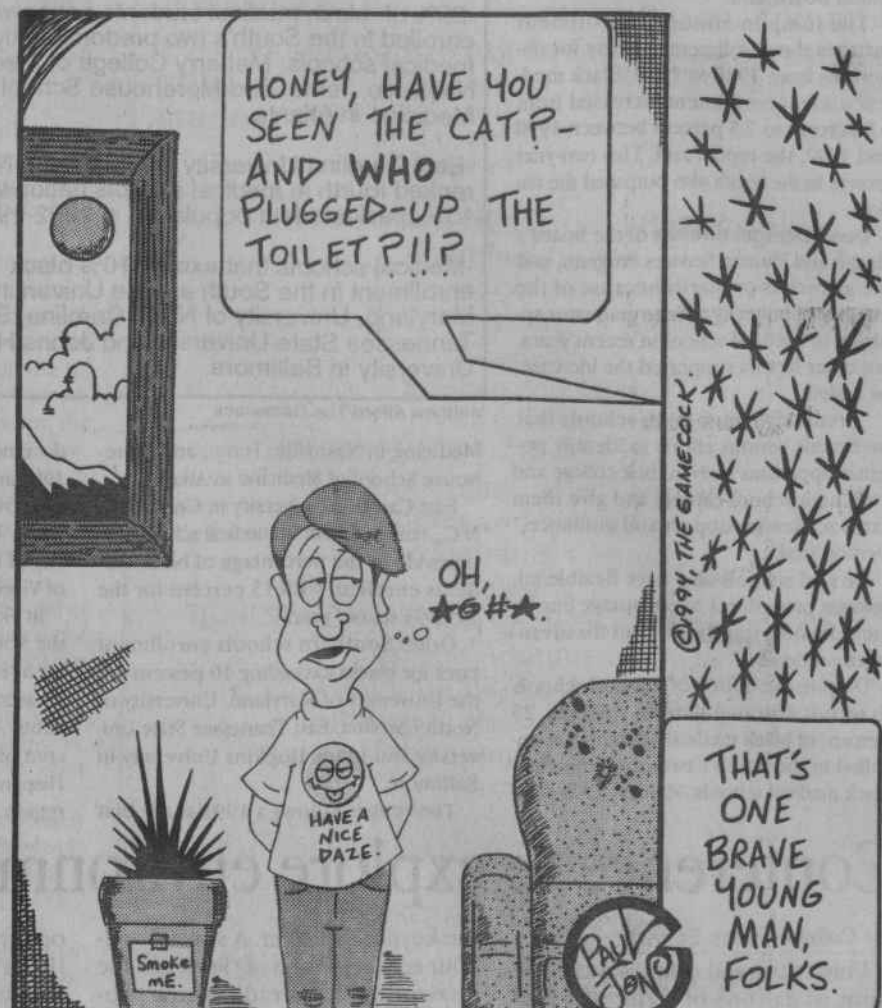
Get it now?

To let morals hinder the economic development of an economy so many claim has gone awry would be something those moralists will regret. Casino gambling is just clean, safe fun. If it's managed properly, the government, proprietors and citizens of South Carolina could truly benefit.

J.T. Wagenheim's column appears every other Monday.

IN AN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA, LET'S INTRODUCE YOU TO EDDIE FARTZ...

TODAY I SMOKED A JOINT AND HALLUCINATED THAT I HAD SHAVED MY CAT, FILLED HIM WITH PORK 'N' BEANS AND FLUSHED HIM DOWN THE TOILET — THE EXPERIENCE SEEMED SO SCARY AND SO REAL, I'LL NEVER SMOKE MARIJUANA AGAIN.



### Quote, Unquote

"This is the first weeklong celebration of Founders' Day. In the past, it has only been recognized in a one-night program. We believe it's very important to celebrate America's foremost civil rights organization. The founding of this movement is the reason we have many of the freedoms we enjoy today."

LaTonia Burrow

Executive assistant to the president of the USC NAACP chapter

## Many media members don't deserve valentines

Today is St. Valentine's Day. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a personal Valentine's greeting to all of the women in my life, from my mother to my professors to the charming young lady who visited our offices Friday. In a world of Bobbitts, Hardings and Menendez jurors, the vast majority of females I know are class individuals. They prove it by being able to put up with the likes of me.

However, I'm going to be a bit more discriminating when I send valentines to members of the media. While some reporters are doing a fine job in their pursuit of the truth, others are giving journalism a bad name.

No Valentine's greetings for producer Rick Kaplan of ABC News. According to Tuesday wire reports, Kaplan served as a media adviser to Bill Clinton's presidential campaign. This wouldn't be an issue if Kaplan hadn't been the producer of "PrimeTime Live" at the time, or if he hadn't told reporter Sam Donaldson to "go easier" on Clinton during a story on the candidate.

Last month, Kaplan was transferred to "World News Tonight," ensuring that you will never again hear the word "Whitewater" pass Peter Jennings' lips.

Speaking of Jennings, the ABC news anchor is also off the Valentine's mailing list. While filing from Sarajevo last week, Big Pete had a 13-year-old Bosnian boy give him a tour of the sites of recent shellings. Jennings wore a flak jacket



Patrick McNeill  
 COLUMNIST

while on camera. The child wasn't provided with additional clothing.

Many viewers weren't amused. In fact, talk-show host G. Gordon Liddy has offered to rebuild Jennings' rectum from scratch. I propose instead that Peter give the jacket to his guest next time, since Jennings obviously isn't prepared to take the flak.

Connie Chung of CBS News won't receive a valentine from me either. On Thursday night, Connie and her "Eye to Eye" team became the defense counsel for Olympic figure skater Tonya Harding. While I'm not (yet) opposed to Harding's participation in the Games, it seems a bit tasteless to have the network plead Tonya's case to preserve its "Lady and the Tramp on Ice" showdown. CBS can "share a moment" with my lunch, and Connie can get her love notes from Maury Povich and David Letterman from now on.

The New York Times was never on my list. But the paper deserves a big lump of coal in its valentine mailbox. Last year, David Brock of The

American Spectator scooped the Times (and the rest of the world) by breaking the Arkansas state trooper story. Rather than write a follow-up or hire Brock, the Times instead decided to "out" Brock as a gay conservative Republican.

In the article, the Times quoted a "former friend" of Brock's, who explained that because David is gay he hates women. And because David hates women, he's a conservative Republican. And because David is a gay conservative republican, he really, really hates Hillary Rodham Clinton and is out to discredit her and that goofy-looking guy she hangs out with. Really.

The Times was scooped again last week by Christopher Ruddy of the New York Post, who broke the news of how the U.S. Park Service botched the investigation into the death of White House counsel Vincent Foster. Be sure to look for the in-depth story next week in the Times about Chris Ruddy and how often he beats his goldfish.

Happy Valentine's Day to all 15 of my readers. Be loving and gentle to each other, and I'll see you next week.

Patrick McNeill's column appears every Monday.

### Letters

#### USC fans don't give Fogler needed support

To the editor:  
 Shame on you USC students! Shame on all fairweather fans!

For all the people at USC and in South Carolina, you don't deserve a winning tradition. Our athletics director does his utmost to bring the finest coaches in the land to give us competitive teams in all sports.

Coach Fogler came at a time when the cupboard was close to being bare. He has installed his system in a very

short time, and although the win/loss record isn't what all of us want it to be, the Gamecocks have played respectable basketball most of the season.

I listen to a sports talk show in Nashville, and each night someone calls in to express amazement at what Fogler has done with this team, although its short of top talent. What really galls me is the lack of support you students and fans all over the state are giving Fogler and the team.

There are over 25,000 students on the main campus and a half million people in the Columbia area, and I've

yet to see an average of over 7,000 to 8,000 in the Coliseum, which seats 12,000.

Building a tradition at an institution is more than just winning games. It takes the support of all fans regardless of the record and regardless of who we're playing. Vandy will lose a game, and although it hurts their fans, there will be 13,000 for their next game.

I remember a few years ago, the Michigan football team had a 7-4 record, terrible by their standards, but they always had 105,000 in the stands for the next game.

This is a tradition, and until you students and fans all over the state take a step forward and assist Fogler, Scott and all other coaches, you don't deserve a winner.

I challenge the fraternities, sororities and spirit groups to band together, pack the Coliseum for the remaining games, give the coach and team the support they need and show the SEC that USC has arrived.

Sid Badger  
 USC alumnus  
 Nashville, Tenn.

### Voices

#### Should welfare benefits be taxed?



"I think the whole welfare system needs to be restructured. I don't think taxing welfare is the answer. The incentives need to be restructured."

Andrew Bullard  
 Biology junior



"I think if people actually need the money, then that's kind of defeating the purpose."

Letia Boseman  
 Public health graduate student



"I definitely don't think they should. It doesn't make any sense to tax welfare. People really need that money."

Rod Dawkins  
 Criminal justice freshman



"No. I don't think it's right. If they're going to give the money away, they shouldn't take it back."

Melanie Creech  
 Biology sophomore



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The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style, possible label or space limitations. Names will not be withheld under any circumstances.

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