

# Viewpoints



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## Silence

*Georgia's decision to condone meditation time in schools must not lead to forced prayer*

The gap between church and state in Georgia lessened Feb. 14, when the state senate passed legislation allowing for "a moment of quiet reflection" in public schools.

When first glancing at the 51-2 vote, it's shocking to see how so many senators agreed to something that is questionable constitutionally. Even more sobering is the fact the two dissenters were holding out for legislation that flatly said the moment was for prayer.

One has to wonder about the motive to institute a truly secular moment of silence, where students are free to pray, think or "look inward."

While the moment of silence is constitutional as long as it remains secular, the real danger exists this precedent will pave the way to force students to pray in school.

And it might not even take another bill to allow prayer to infiltrate the schools. It's a pretty good guess that some school districts, especially ones in rural Georgia, will treat the "quiet moment of reflection" in theory as one for prayer in practice.

There's nothing inherently wrong with a moment of silence per se. Perhaps the Legislature legitimately feels students need time without administrative pressures or classwork to simply think. If that's the issue, then there's no legitimate reason to contest a moment of silence.

Still, the Legislature's attitude seems to be that this is a step toward prayer in schools, which simply can't be allowed to happen.

The argument that not having forced prayer is an infringement on students' free speech has been argued time and again. The bottom line is that prayer in public schools is a violation of the establishment clause. Students are free to pray during their free time, just like other students have time to pursue their personal concerns.

Students who want to pray can do so on their own time, not on taxpayer-funded state time.

According to a 1971 ruling by the Supreme Court, moments of silence are an acceptable division of church and state as long as they are truly secular and don't advance religion.

If Georgia's new "moment of quiet reflection" remains what its supporters say it is, then fine. But if it turns into a concealed school prayer, then it must be and will be challenged in court.

Georgia is skating on thin constitutional ice with the "moment of quiet reflection." As it's stated now, the moment is pretty pointless. But give it any more strength, it will be unconstitutional.

Basically, Georgia legislators are wasting their constituents' money on unnecessary legislation. What's new?

## Students owe apology for election apathy

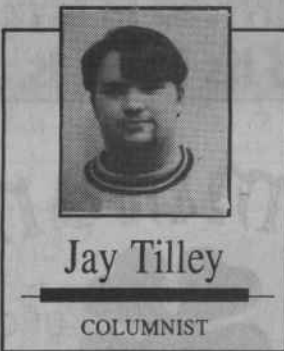
Dear candidates:

On behalf of the student body, one of the laziest in the nation, I'd like to offer this apology. We're sorry for our apathy and any difficulty we may have caused you or your campaign teams in last week's SG elections, or the difficulty we may cause those of you in tomorrow's run-off elections.

We're too busy to vote and put in our two cents about what we think should be done for the betterment of our student body and who should carry these items out in their respective offices. Even though it only takes a few moments of our precious time, we simply can't find the time to fill out a ballot and place it in a box.

In addition, my dear candidates, we basically have an "I could care less" attitude about who's running, what they stand for and how they're going to accomplish their goals if they're elected. Why do we have this rather slack attitude, you might ask? We feel our vote doesn't count, despite the messages sent out by student media on why our vote does indeed count.

My potential student government pets, it doesn't really matter to us that only 9.3 percent of the student body voted. We don't see the point in the whole student body getting involved. In other words, change SG from a farce to a powerful and helpful tool for student needs.



Jay Tilley

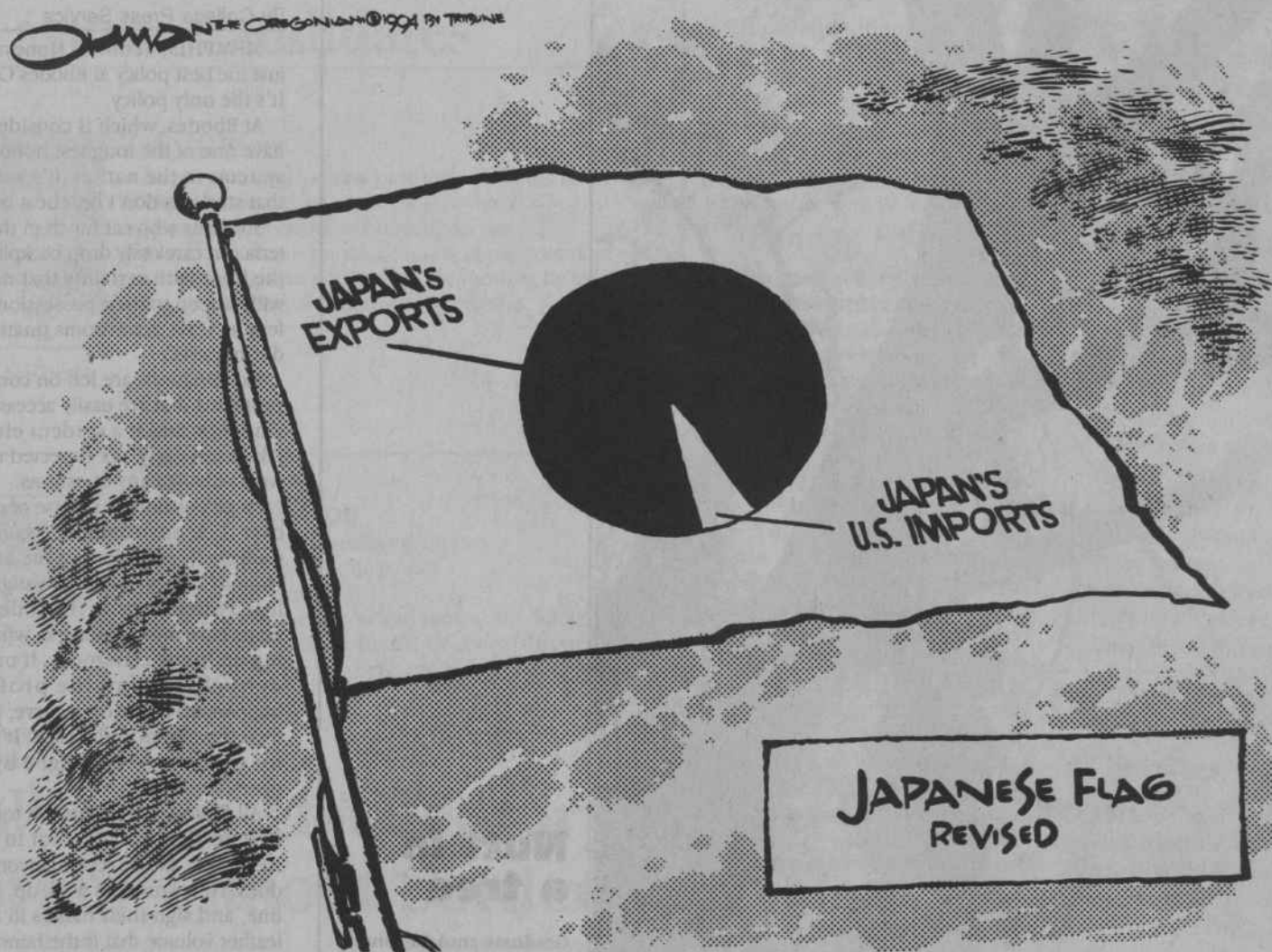
COLUMNIST

Moreover, my dear office seekers, we simply don't care about the issues being debated during these seemingly pointless elections. Either that, or we don't care enough to take some sort of positive-reinforcement action. We don't care that we can't find a parking place on campus or that visitation is too strict or that tuition rates are sky-high.

In conclusion, my dear candidates, I sincerely hope you'll accept this apology I've presented on behalf of the student body. We, the students at USC, wish we could be more helpful to you, the candidates, but as stated before, we're just too apathetic.

However, let the point be made that we'll be sure to complain about who's elected tomorrow and what SG is doing in the future. We realize we won't have the right to take this action, but apathy won't let us have it any other way.

Cordially yours,  
 Jay Tilley



### Quote, Unquote

"In the 10 years I've been working with the student senate, this is the first time that there's been a need for this kind of authority. I'm neutral on it. I don't think it'll cause any harm."

Woody Carothers

SG Adviser

On the line-item veto amendment pending in the student senate

## Post-adolescent whiners need to face reality

So, I hate my life, right?

After seeing the newest post-adolescent angst flick, "Reality Bites," I've come to the conclusions that life is terrible and that I'll never find a job, so I may as well just give it up.

If the movie is to hold any weight, that's what we should all do.

Well, pardon me if I don't. I've had just about all I can take of 20-something Generation Xers whining about how we have no job market, no role models, can't have sex, can't eat, can't drink, can't sunbathe, can't walk on the street, can't leave our doors unlocked, etc. like our parents could. I'm even tired of the terms "20-something" and "Generation X."

The deal is, some things are worse than they were for our parents. We're missing a lot of the things our parents took for granted, such as eating Halloween candy without X-raying it first or talking to a stranger without fearing he would shoot you dead.

Then again, TV, which is now said to be so hyper-violent as to encourage children to burn their domiciles to the ground, featured such questionable storylines as "let's hunt down and kill the Indians" and "those dirty Japs."

Anyway, in the excessively irritating "Reality Bites," Winona Ryder and her pals complain they have nothing to live for, no ideals, nothing to look forward to. They stumble about from job to job,



Lee Clontz

VIEWPOINTS EDITOR

paying rent when they can, but always with enough money for beer, cigarettes and marijuana.

When Winona does go job hunting, dressed like a bohemian refugee with the haircut of a Pekinese mongrel, she tries to shop her documentary of her loser friends and their pathetic lives to companies which, let's be frank, have better things to do.

Perhaps most irksome of all is the love story in this misguided mess, which involves a love triangle between Winona, her best friend and a '90s yuppie, played by Ethan Hawke and Ben Stiller respectively.

For some reason, the writers of this movie got it in their heads that the guy with the nice car, the good job and the future is simply the wrong person for Winona. By making a future for himself, he must be materialistic, greedy and stupid. No, she would be much happier with the greasy-haired beat poet who really stands for something, always uttering the brilliant passages apparently taken from Manchu Wok fortune cookies.

How touching. How noble. What utter crap.

The fact of the matter is, there's nothing wrong with trying to make a future for yourself. People supposedly don't go to college to learn to be alternative and counterculture. If you do, don't complain when you can't find a job.

Perhaps the most annoying aspect of this entire movie is the outrage the audience is supposed to show when the Stiller yuppie character buys Winona's stupid documentary and makes a "Real World" show out of it for the network he works for. He is presented as a sellout who has desecrated her great work of art.

Who writes this garbage? Are these supposed to be real people? Good grief, I hope not.

While I realize it's "cool" to think everything sucks, I don't buy it. I'm in college, I can take care of myself, and I don't have to go to bed at night worried that the Russians are going to wipe us off the map while I sleep.

If you want to waste your time whining about your bad lot, save your breath. Nobody cares, so you might as well learn to take care of yourself.

Who says reality bites? Only people who don't want to face it.

### Letters

#### Life doesn't begin at conception

To the editor:

I'm writing in response to Patrick McNeill's column in the Feb. 21 issue of The Gamecock, "Abortion facts don't back up pro-choice argument."

I'm a female who has experienced first-hand what occurs in dealing with abortion. My best friend became pregnant from failed contraception and had an abortion. Her doctor told her that had she given birth, she could have died from kidney failure. That was a risk she had to take, and she's happy with it.

I'd like to argue some of Patrick's points. First, life doesn't begin at

conception. Up until three months, the embryo isn't able to survive outside of the mother, so it's not a life yet. Second, the rate of teenage pregnancy has increased because of the lack of sex education. Get more education, and there will be fewer pregnancies and fewer abortions.

Third, no man, judge or other human is going to tell me what I can and can't do with my body. Men can't, and never will, know what it's like to give birth to a baby, so I think they should just let us live our lives. Last, Planned Parenthood is a service that offers not only abortions but also all forms of contraceptives, morning-after pills, GYN testing and pregnancy testing.

If your best female friend had an

abortion, would you rather her live from a safe one or die from a back-alley one? The choice is yours, and let it rest on your conscience forever.

Cassie Shannon  
 Education freshman

#### Religious Right misinterprets Gospel

To the editor:

I've always considered myself a Christian. However, recently, I've become aware that when someone asks me about my religious beliefs, I'm wary of saying I'm a Christian.

I don't want anyone to jump to the conclusion that I'm a fundamentalist. I believe fundamentalism

is diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Instead, I go into a somewhat lengthy exposition of my beliefs.

It seems the word "Christian" has developed negative connotations. So many people in our society who want others to think well of them call themselves Christians, even if in the next instant they're indulging in truly vicious or bigoted behavior toward their neighbors.

The people of the Religious Right may be motivated, they may be well organized, and they may be politically powerful. But they've missed the central point of the Gospel.

Jim Gleaton  
 Nursing statistician

### Voices

## Should public schools have a prayer period?

"I think it should be voluntary and not mandatory."



Pernin Anderson  
 Journalism junior

"The marriage of church and what is publicly funded is a bad idea."



Alex Suaudom  
 Psychology senior

"I feel that prayer should be allowed in schools, because once it was taken out, teen violence increased."



Adria Johnson  
 Political science freshman

"I'm a Christian, and I do believe that prayer should be allowed in school, but at the same time, students should not be forced to pray."



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