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No need to carry concealed weapons

How would you feel if it were legal to carry a concealed weapon in South Carolina?

Would it make you feel more secure because you could carry one, or would it make you slightly nervous, because you don't know who else has one?

The Federalist Society sponsored another legal debate at the Law School Thursday night, this time on the right to carry a concealed weapon. The main topic of discussion was a piece of legislation that would legalize such a practice.

The legal aspect of the conceal-carry bill is a point of debate that will be settled elsewhere. Regardless of whether or not it is one's right to carry a concealed weapon, one must ask whether or not it is productive, or for that matter, necessary.

South Carolina only has three cities that would qualify for the term metropolis. These cities are still relatively small with limited crime. Crime in the other areas of South Carolina is not abnormally high, either. There seems to be no place in South Carolina where it would be necessary to wield a gun for defense purposes.

Furthermore, the college campus is no place for firearms. Students are relatively safe on campus, and the Horseshoe squirrels aren't good game for hunting. Guns on campus are totally unnecessary. (The bill presented at the debate prohibits guns on college campuses and events.)

If this bill is passed, you will have the right to carry a weapon in certain parts of South Carolina. However, just because you are able to doesn't mean it's an intelligent thing to do.

Remember the power of firearms. Think about the consequences of using one before you carry one around with you.



QUOTE, UNQUOTE

"Talk to them yourself. Ask them, 'Do you want help?' If they don't want to help themselves, then you certainly can't help them. They'll be dead, busted or in jail."

Former USC football player and Heisman trophy winner George Rogers, on helping friends with a drug addiction

Beardman reveals cause of shutdown

Normally I wouldn't write about national government affairs because the petty arguments and posturing between the pachyderms and the donkey, in Washington tend to bore me. Let's face it, the squirrel overcrowding crisis on campus far outweighs host news coming from within the Beltway.

This week, however, I feel obligated to write something about the situation facing the federal government. As you might have noticed, a large portion of the government was kinda ... well ... closed, just shut down like a McDonald's that wasn't generating enough Big Mac revenue. It seems through constant withdrawals at the giant federal ATM without ever balancing the checkbook, the government sort of ran out of money.

I immediately felt a connection to my government like none I've ever felt before. Who would have believed they handle finances just like I handle mine?

The reason I felt obligated to write about the financial crisis is not my new feeling of kinship with Newt, Bill and the rest of Our Gang. Instead, I think I can help explain exactly what caused the budget shutdown. Yes, I'm not proud to say it, but I think it's my fault.

As you might have read, I was in Washington a few weeks ago for a media conference. I'm afraid I might have done a few things that put a drain on the government.

First, I didn't buy any of the Neapolitan freeze-dried ice cream from the Air-Space museum. I was planning to, but I got there late and immediately sprinted over to the Enola Gay exhibit, which was closed. I never got time to get back by the gift shop to buy my little aluminum foil package of freeze-dried goodness. Surely that extra little bit of revenue could have helped things out a lot.

That's just the start, though. When I was in the American History museum, I went to the restroom. I'm afraid I didn't quite turn off the water at the sink all the way. I can just see the money drip-drip-dripping

CHRIS MULDROW

Columnist

away from the budget as we speak.

A guy in Washington approached me for some money. I figured he was just some bum, seeking change for liquor. Now that I look back on the situation, I realize that was no bum — it was the Secretary of the Treasury. If I hadn't been greedy and said I didn't have any money when I obviously did (I was a tourist in Washington...of course I had money), I could have thrown a wrench in the wheels of government shutdown.

Of course, these problems in Washington weren't the start of my fatal blow to the budget. Once I was camping in a National Park and backed up my car when I was ready to leave. I hit something with a loud thump as I was backing, but didn't think anything of it. It turns out what I hit was Smoky, the friendly fire fighting bear we all know and love. The Park Service had to replace Smoky — do you know how much it costs to buy a bear who can talk and is willing to wear one of those hats? Neither do I, but it ain't cheap.

I also have a little signal mirror that I use to flash signals to planes in the air. I apparently didn't have my code quite perfected, though, because I signaled an entire wing of multimillion dollar F-16 fighters to veer from their courses and land in Chile. The Chilean Air Force (which previously consisted of a Cessna trainer, a helicopter with no rotor and 23 hang gliders with Daisy BB guns mounted to the wings) was very happy with my mishap, but our government was out quite a few dollars.

I'm gonna get us out of this mess I've created, though. I've decided to set up a table on Greene Street and start signing people up for credit cards. If I make as much money as the companies say I will, I could have us fully financed in a few weeks. Maybe I can even hand out free water bottles and boxer shorts. I dug us this hole, I'll get us out.

Let's do a little comparison. How does the University of South Carolina differ from a university like Harvard? For that matter, you could use any Ivy League school, or any school of merit such as Duke or Vanderbilt or UNC-Chapel Hill.

Well, many of the differences are obvious. Ivy League schools are steeped in academic tradition. The faculty at these schools are generally the best in the nation and often are some of the top scholars in their fields. The admissions standards are far more rigorous. Many are privately funded and hence wealthier (but also more expensive).

All of these are things over which students have little control. However, there is one area of higher learning in which students can facilitate growth: in the academic environment or climate of a university.

One of my professors, new to USC this year, brought this issue to my attention about a week ago. He made the observation that a competitive academic spirit seems to be lacking here. There seems to be a stigma attached to discussing intellectual matters, and many are apprehensive towards debate or discourse, even among friends.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hunger drive is over, but don't forget the needy

Thank you for Shin Yun's article (Tuesday Nov. 14) on Oxfam. Not enough can be said about this organization. Oxfam activities had great participation this week, and they are finished for this semester. However, this does not mean we should not think about the hungry until next year.

Hunger is not a small problem. It consumes the lives of over a billion people everyday. It is not just the problem of small, obscure countries that many of us cannot find on a map. It is a problem in every nation in the world. As an international community, we at USC need to make every effort to stay in the fight. This makes participation in a group like Oxfam almost an obligation.

We will all be going home next week for Thanksgiving. Many of us will welcome the full turkey dinner with all the trimmings. We should then think of all the people who are thankful for having only a rotted potato or a handful of rice for Thanksgiving dinner. Or remember when we are sick of the turkey leftovers that others will be looking for our leftovers, in great anticipation, from our garbage cans.

Show how thankful we really are and help support Oxfam and the many other organizations out there helping to make a more meaningful existence for others.

Beverly Wilson
Senior Religious Studies

MATT PRUITT

Viewpoints Editor

This reluctance to carry academic discussion out of the classroom is one of the reasons USC does not have the academic reputation of some of the aforementioned universities. The spirit of a university is easily discernable; my professor picked up on it in less than two months. This spirit helps to determine a university's standing and reputation.

All right, to be fair, these other universities have some major advantages. Most of them are smaller, so it's easier for this spirit to reach and affect everyone. They also generally have a more homogenous population, which contributes to a somewhat unified mindset. Also, at many of these schools, the curriculum is so strenuous that academics naturally permeate your other activities.

Despite all these factors, USC is not prohibited from developing a strong intellectual climate. All we need is to break down a few old stereotypes.

First of all, attending some sort of lecture, debate, exhibit or performance

for reasons other than class assignments or extra credit does not make you some sort of social reject. If you have an interest in a certain subject, or think you might be interested, don't hesitate to check it out.

Second, it is totally false that you cannot develop a social life and an academic one at the same time. If you socialize with certain people, you can discuss life issues while you relax with your friends.

Many of you out there are probably saying, "After I'm in class all day, all week, I just want to sit down and have a drink." So go ahead. There's no rule that says you can't discuss or debate religion or political theory over a beer. Of course, if you keep it up too long you might lose your ability to put together a coherent sentence. All things in moderation.

Also, keep in mind that when I say "intellectual" or "academic," I'm using this term liberally. I don't mean that you should try to validate the fundamental theorem of calculus every time you sit down with a friend, or that you need to debate whether or not you exist at a party. Just don't be afraid to bring up something more serious than this afternoon's talk shows.

There's another reason for promoting this type of discussion besides bettering your university. When I spoke with a faculty member here at USC during my senior year, he told me that I would learn more from discussing the meaning of life with my friends at 2 a.m. than I ever would in the classroom. I think he was right. I think we stand to learn a lot more from people than we do from books.

Let me just say, though, that I don't think it's necessary to walk around quoting some Greek philosopher or literary genius all the time. If you don't let yourself go for some totally non-intellectual activity, I would say that you're unnatural in some way. Beavis and Butt-head won't augment your vocabulary, but the fact remains that they're funny as hell.

If we can just loosen up the inhibitions that we have about discussing some more "academic" topics, we can do a great deal to better ourselves and our university. You don't have to do it in lofty terms or big words, and, for everybody's sake, don't do it all the time, but at least give it a chance. You might like it.

(P.S. — Thanks Professor Munn.)

Touchberry's voucher system equates racism

Foolish, provincial, biased and paltry argumentation with separatist overtones: These words describe my reaction to the latest of Tommy Touchberry's articles.

I have read several of Mr. Touchberry's articles and find myself amazed at the lack of argumentation skills needed to adequately present his latest viewpoint/ruse of how government should actually be handling the education problem in this country. Due to word constraints, I will itemize my arguments with respect to the order in which his appear in his article.

First, Mr. Touchberry uses the word immoral in reference to tax-funded education because, by definition, religion includes secular humanism as a denomination, and thereby it is being preferentially treated by a state-funded institution. Mr. Touchberry is confused on several points which he presents with this argument.

Separation of church and state means that religious leaders/institutions will not be given opportunity to dictate public policy in America since America has too many religions to be represented. It does not mean that, because he deems secular humanism a religion, separation of church and state has been violated.

Furthermore, having established by definition that the church and state

separation has not been violated, how can Mr. Touchberry therefore deem paying for education with tax-dollars as immoral? If that is the case, then funding military is definitely immoral! Think about it: the military is instructing people on how to be murderers.

Secondly, Mr. Touchberry thinks that if the government were to use his proposed voucher system all religions would be treated equally. Then, by his definition, what about secular humanism or other minority religions such as Muslim and Greek Orthodox? Since the Roman Catholic Church has the most members nationwide, Roman Catholic families would be getting a disproportionate share of the money just by their sheer numbers. Thereby, the voucher system, not deliberately, would be aiding which ever religion happened to be the majority. So much for equality!

This brings me to my final point about Mr. Touchberry's article: the implications of the voucher system. This system seems to, very subtly, separate people of different religions by sending Muslims children to Muslim schools and Roman Catholic children to Roman Catholic schools, etc.

Of course, one could argue that the voucher system allows parents the freedom to send their children to any school, implying that maybe parents of the Baptist denomination would send their children to a Muslim school

or vice versa. That would be ideal, but definitely liberal, and we all know that Mr. Touchberry's opinion is anything but liberal.

By spouting anti-liberal rhetoric, Mr. Touchberry cleverly gilds his arguments' true intention: Mend the ailing education system by segregation! If this is conservative, then conservative ideology, with respect to education, is racist!

J. Pierre Gittinger
Geography graduate student

write now

Reader responses are welcome. Letters should be between 200 and 250 words and should be delivered personally to The Gamecock, Room 333 of the Russell House



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