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**IN OUR
OPINION**

Senators need to do work to earn student's respect

For the past month we have seen a lot of bickering over what powers the student senate and Student Government in general does or does not have.

This has all been a part of the controversy caused by Senator Bryan Menees' "perks bill."

The powers proscribed to our student government are rather vague and can be argued over for an eternity. But, what all the members of SG and the student body need to realize is a simple old cliché that any person in power should follow: Actions speak louder than words.

In the history of our American democracy, we can see those leaders who make promises and don't act on them are not trusted by, or very popular with, the voters.

Once a leader does something for a group of people, they see he or she might actually care about them. They believe in the leader and trust him or her to do more good things with the power he or she has.

That is why the morals and ethics of a candidate are always more closely examined the higher the political office.

Media now paying the price for convicting bombing suspect

This Saturday, it was announced former security guard Richard Jewell is no longer considered a suspect in the July 27 bombing at Atlanta's Centennial Park.

The acquittal was no doubt welcome news to Jewell, who for months lived in a world surrounded by suspicion, accusation and humiliation.

Who knows if Jewell planted the bomb or not. And actually, who really cares. The mass media has once again run Jewell's story into the ground.

But, wearing out the bombing escapade wasn't the only thing the media can be found guilty for; it's also responsible for accusing a man and almost convicting him of a crime he had not been found guilty of committing.

As members of the media, our job is to inform readers and

Student Senate

Student senate should earn student body's respect before expecting "perks."

The more important the office is, the more trust the people need to have in the officeholder. This is the folly we have seen with our own student

government.

Senator Menees and others understand that for the senate to have real power they need to be trusted by the student body.

But they want the students trust first, without having earned it.

The student body needs to see something from student senate. Anything.

The moment they make that step in the positive direction, then the student body will immediately place more trust in them.

Then they will have more power to do other things that are good for the students. Then, maybe, the students will trust them enough to give them "perks," but not before.

So for now, all the bickering needs to stop. The students need to demand action from SG, and SG needs to deliver.

Only then will we be on the road to establishing trust between the two.

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Quote, Unquote

"One day we'll be the people who make a difference; we'll be the leaders and teachers. Without a strong commitment to service, we'll fall backwards."

Amanda Colton, junior, on the importance of participating in programs such as City Year.

School officials should use common sense

**Cece von Kolnitz
Special Projects**

Maybe the recent rash of ridiculous school punishments leveled at children can be blamed on boredom.

Maybe the problems of child abuse, drop-outs, teen-age pregnancies, shootings, suicide, sexually transmitted diseases, drugs, theft and illiteracy haven't been severe enough lately to keep schools busy.

Maybe school administrators needed a change, a deviation from the everyday stuff, the real trivial stuff like the possibility of someone bringing a gun to school or the fact that more and more of their students are using drugs.

The administrators at one middle school decided to find and solve a real

problem: steak-knife wielding 11-year-old girls with devious plans of trying to cut baked chicken.

By now the whole country probably knows the story of 11-year-old Charlotte Kirk and her arrest and expulsion from Hopkins Middle School after packing a steak knife with her school lunch.

Kirk was arrested and expelled after asking a teacher if she could use her steak knife to eat her lunch. She's going back to school Tuesday after being reinstated by the Richland District 1 school board, but she will still have a suspension on her school record, according to an article in The State newspaper.

No matter what else she remembers, the one thing that will stand out in Charlotte Kirk's mind when she thinks about her middle school days will be the

time she was almost expelled for trying to make eating her lunch easier. She'll remember not to trust teachers or administrators, not to expect any leniency or forgiveness for making a simple mistake.

The fact that the board has so graciously decided to let her go back to school doesn't change the silliness of the situation.

Administrators say they're in a bind. They say they're damned if they do enforce the rules and damned if they don't.

The superintendent of Richland 1 told The State newspaper that where weapons are concerned principals "cannot exercise discretion or prerogative."

The truth is they can and could have exercised their discretion. In this case, they just didn't.

What I want to know is what's wrong with considering each situation, especially in a situation as obviously harmless as Charlotte Kirk's? What happened to sense and reason in her case?

Weapons aren't allowed in schools, and no one would say that's a bad policy. If a student brings a knife to school, it should be taken away. But a policy that makes such obvious sense shouldn't be taken to absurd ends.

I've read stories about high school students charged with murder of a classmate who were acquitted because juries believed them when they said they brought guns to school for self-protection.

Why couldn't administrators at Hopkins Middle School believe Charlotte Kirk only wanted to cut her baked chicken?

Letters To The Editor

Same-sex marriage infringes on rights of the majority

To the editor,

The language used by liberals (most recently Cece von Kolnitz) to describe those who supported the Defense of Marriage Act is quite revealing.

The highly emotional and harsh rhetoric recently used shows what liberals so often mean by "tolerance" and "acceptance," values so espoused by liberalism.

What is really meant is tolerance for who believe as they do, but critical attacks against, and very intolerant rhetoric toward, those who don't.

Where is the tolerance for those who believe that marriage is ordained of God and find it degrading to their beliefs to define marriage as a union between same sex couples?

What about respecting their beliefs? What about their rights? Who is screaming about the injustices, offensiveness, prejudices they must endure as they watch what they hold sacred destroyed or mocked? Where is the "tolerance" and "acceptance" for their views?

To use von Kolnitz's own words, I find the name calling and attacks against those who believe homosexuality is wrong as "offensive, prejudiced, bigoted, and reminds me of why I got a voter registration card."

Another issue I have with liberals is the belief that somehow rights are being taken away by defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, which is how it has always been defined.

If a few people suddenly decide to say red is green, this may be their "right," but it doesn't change the fact that the color is still red.

They may run around and say they are being prosecuted by intolerant bigots or extremists who continue to say red is red, but it still doesn't change the fact that the color is red.

redeine red as green, what about the rights of the majority who want to continue to say red is red. More than 70 percent of Americans believe marriage should be defined as a union between a man and a woman.

Liberals make it sound like we live in a land of unlimited freedom or unbanded rights, but this is naive and impossible. No society could survive in such chaos.

My rights have limits because others have rights, and their rights have limits because I have rights. When issues exist that we can't agree upon, that is why we have a democracy.

A basic principle of democracy is that the majority has certain rights. If this was not the case then we would have the tyranny of the minority, which some believe we have today.

The Defense of Marriage Act was needed because one state's action would have taken away the rights of all the other states by forcing them to recognize same-sex marriages, regardless of what each state thought was right or had voted upon.

The act was democracy and common sense, not "homophobia" as liberals would have us believe.

Chris Herrod
Graduate Student

SG attacks unwarranted

To the editor,

First of all, I would like to respond directly to the comments that were made in a letter to the editor attacking SG.

I am a freshman at USC, and I am a member of Freshmen Council, a part of SG that represents all the freshmen at USC. As a member of SG, Computer Science senior Dev Brown's attacks concern me, but knowing senators like

Bryan Menees and the reasoning behind his proposals, Brown's conclusions about SG are cowardly and intolerant.

As I read Brown's opinion about SG, it is apparent that Brown has never run for any SG office and has probably never even visited SG in the Russell House.

If you haven't attempted to run for office, participated in SG elections or voiced your concerns to your SG senator, then shut up.

Every leader in SG volunteers their time and efforts to make this university a better place for their fellow peers.

They work hard without thanks to represent the ideas and opinions they believe are important to the student body. This was made clear to me after I had the chance to speak to senators and other SG leaders.

In responding to the letter, let me teach Brown about the principles of respect and power, because it is ignorance that hinders the advancement of ideas and concerns that real students have on campus.

Any idea, program or legislation that comes out of SG must have the full support of the student body in order for that policy to be implemented into the university system.

For example, an academic forgiveness policy that comes out of SG, combined with petitions, phone calls and marches in front of the faculty senate, will command power and respect and give way to changes we would like to see at the university.

On the other hand, an academic forgiveness policy that comes out of SG that only has the support of nine to 10 percent of the students who voted in the last SG election will not get any attention from the administration.

Power and respect is a two-way street. The senate does not receive power or gain respect from having "perks." Rather, it is the student body support that yields respect and power for SG officers.

Additional power and perks for SG offices will certainly create greater interest in those positions held within SG, leading to a greater number of students running and voting during SG elections, hence a greater ability to command changes from the administration.

I have known Bryan Menees for several years and have had the opportunity to speak with him about the proposed changes within the student senate.

The proposals offered are more about controlling all of our student activity fees and making the student senate more visible. The changes will only benefit future SG officers, not current officers. The changes will also increase the overall participation in SG elections.

With this effect taking place, that opens the door for more responsibility within SG, and that will help to carry out the concerns of the students on a more consistent basis.

By allowing more responsibility within the senate, the student body will have motivation and direction in which to lead the charge for the policies that the administration is reluctant to implement for the students.

To Dev Brown: Do not criticize a plan that you have not read, and you don't understand.

Furthermore, do not ever again criticize SG and the senators elected to volunteer their time and efforts for the betterment of their peers and this great university.

The next time you feel the urge to attack fellow students who have done 10 times the service to USC that you have, and you feel SG does not have any "real" power, I would remind you that the Computer Science Department's budget is up for review next semester.

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