



# Viewpoints

## QUOTE, UNQUOTE

"The South has severed countless blows in its history because it is identified with slavery, racism, and segregation."

-Harold Cosby, Resident of Beaufort-

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The Gamecock

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2000

## The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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## Teetering on the edge of genetically correct

Now that science has taken a few million steps forward in mapping out the human genome, making the dream of curing a host of diseases a viable possibility, certain Washington lawmakers are already on the move to use the breakthrough to further a political agenda. In this age of rampantly pathetic political correctness—when no one is responsible for his or her actions because he or she is a victim or something or someone, a few of our more "compassionate" elected officials are seeing fit to apply this concept to perhaps the most significant scientific discovery of our time.

It seems a law is trying to be greased through the ever-decaying halls of common sense that no one should be discriminated against because of a genetic flaw. For example, once we are able to carry our own genetic coding around on our persons the way we carry driver's licenses, an employer with access to a prospective employee's "genetic code readout" could not refuse said employee a job based on his or her genetic impurities.

While it sounds delightfully enlightened on the surface, this would undoubtedly lead to a myriad of outright stupidity. Imagine a person deaf from birth because of genetic makeup being hired as a 9-1-1 responder because not giving him or her the job would make the person a "victim of genetic discrimination." Imagine a quadraplegic from birth because of a genetic malfunction given the job of lifeguard because it would no longer be "genetically correct" to deny said person the position. While society would be patting itself on its collective back for being "extra sensitive" to victims of genetic bad luck, a young woman dies in her home from a violent crime and a small child drowns in the community pool.

But, alas, shouldn't the lives of a few be sacrificed for the feelings of another few? After all, it's the government's job to hold everyone's hand through every specific detail of everyday life because most are too "victimized" to deal with it on their own. The one shred of hope in this is that perhaps next science will find a way to rid the human brain of stupidity completely.

### ABOUT US

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Letters to the editor or guest columns are welcome from all members of the Carolina community. Letters should be 250-300 words. Guest columns should be an opinion piece of about 600-700 words. Both must include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. Handwritten submissions must be personally delivered to Russell House room 333. E-mail submissions must include telephone number for confirmation. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit for libel, style and space. Anonymous letters will not be published. Photos are required for guest columnist and can be provided by the submitter. Call 777-7726 for more information.

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### WASHINGTON POST

"I GET SO MAD WHEN THEY DON'T FOLLOW DIRECTIONS"



### HARE AND TORTOISE 2000



### SOCIAL ISSUES

## Keeping you safe from interns

*The federal government: keeping you safe from interns. Behind-the-scenes at a major-market internship, part two.*

As evidenced by recent events in Los Alamos, the government has been playing fast and loose with national nuclear security secrets, placing the protection of such secrets on the level of importance of, say, loose change in a sofa after an all-night keg party. So, as some tyrannical world leader is one step closer to blowing Des Moines, Iowa, into infinity, I can't help thinking back to my experience of coming face-to-face with the one thing the government feels it must protect this country against more than any other: interns.

It was a cold February morning (not that it matters; I just like the phrase "cold February morning") when my news editor, jolted awake by her usual breakfast of a pony keg of black Starbucks coffee, called me into her office. I politely waited for her tremors to subside. Then she told me.



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Democratic New York Sen. Hey-Everybody-Look-At-Me was having a press conference in the Senate press gallery on Capitol Hill (I think it was to blame Republicans were to blame for a vast right-wing conspiracy to poke holes in liberals' underwear or whatever). The time was 10:30 in the morning. The press conference was at 11:00. That meant I had exactly a half hour to hail a cab, explain to the cab driver 14 times where I wanted to go ("You want me drive Burger King?" "No. Capitol Hill." "Oh! You want me drive to Burger King." "No! Capitol Hill!"), and wade through downtown D.C. traffic.

By some miracle of Allah (I would say "God," but I'm certain someone would be offended—gosh, I'm so diverse), I arrived with 10 minutes to spare. Home free, right? Wrong.

At the side door where the "important" people enter, I encountered a stocky, military-looking fellow with Astroturf hair and a sneer on his face that made me feel about as welcome as a monk at an orgy. After staring at my press pass for the length of time it would take to read the first three chapters of a Tolstoy novel, he gave me a cursory grunt that I interpreted as, "Go on in."

I did, only to be greeted by two more security guards, one who stood with his arms folded across his chest and another about the size of a soft-drink machine

standing just beyond the metal detector and X-ray machine. After placing my wallet, notebook, keys, change, pens, water bottle, press pass and spleen on a conveyor belt to be X-rayed, I stepped through the metal detector.

It beeped. "Step through again," Soft Drink Machine growled. I did. It beeped again.

"Stand with your arms and legs apart, please," came Machine's command, who proceeded to search me just short of the kind of affection you would expect in prison. Being an overweight, "mature" undergrad student, it was the most action I had seen in a while, so I went with it.

After a heated search, Machine found the security risk I was harboring that was making the metal detector beep: a box of breath mints.

With four minutes to spare, I was finally free to ride the elevator to the third floor and make it to the press gallery just in time. But, of course, that was not meant to be.

Blocking the gallery door was yet another security checkpoint, occupied by a burly gentleman eyeing me as if I had stopped by the Senate Press Gallery Weapons Silo between checkpoints to stash a couple of assault rifles down my pants. Again, I emptied my pockets (remembering the breath mints this time). This time I didn't beep, but my wallet aroused