



THE GAMECOCK

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IN OUR OPINION

State group can make difference

This isn't the first time South Carolina's student government leaders have tried to form a statewide association, but after the inaugural conference this past weekend at USC, this association might have a chance of survival.

The problem with student governments is that they are composed of students who usually serve one-year terms. As soon as one class gets things rolling in a statewide organization, the members graduate or leave office, passing the job to the next class, who might or might not share the same passions. But the

Now it's up to the student governments involved to be an effective voice for South Carolina college students.

name of this newest attempt, the South Carolina State Student Association, gives this organization a fresh start. There is no reference to student government at all; it's simply an association looking out for the

best interests of students, something all student governments should strive for.

It's sad that most students are turned off after hearing anything about student government, but this is based on some facts. Too often student government serves as a resume builder instead of a student advocate. But at this conference the new association elected officers, wrote a constitution and set up three meetings a year, including a meeting in the summer for new members.

On paper, this association has a chance to make a difference. Now it's up to those involved to be an effective voice for South Carolina college students. The association's purpose is to lobby the state legislature for student interests. South Carolina college students are stronger united than they are separated. The association's first stated purpose is to tackle higher education budget cuts and hold our elected officials accountable for their actions. It has been too long since students have had an advocate in the state legislature, and if this association takes off, it looks like we will finally have one.

Now is the turning point. SCSSA has all of the organizing already accomplished, but it's time to do something. We hope history will not repeat itself.

IT'S YOUR RIGHT

Exercise your right to voice your opinion. Create message boards at www.dailygamecock.com or send letters to the editor to gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu



GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know. E-mail us at gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu.

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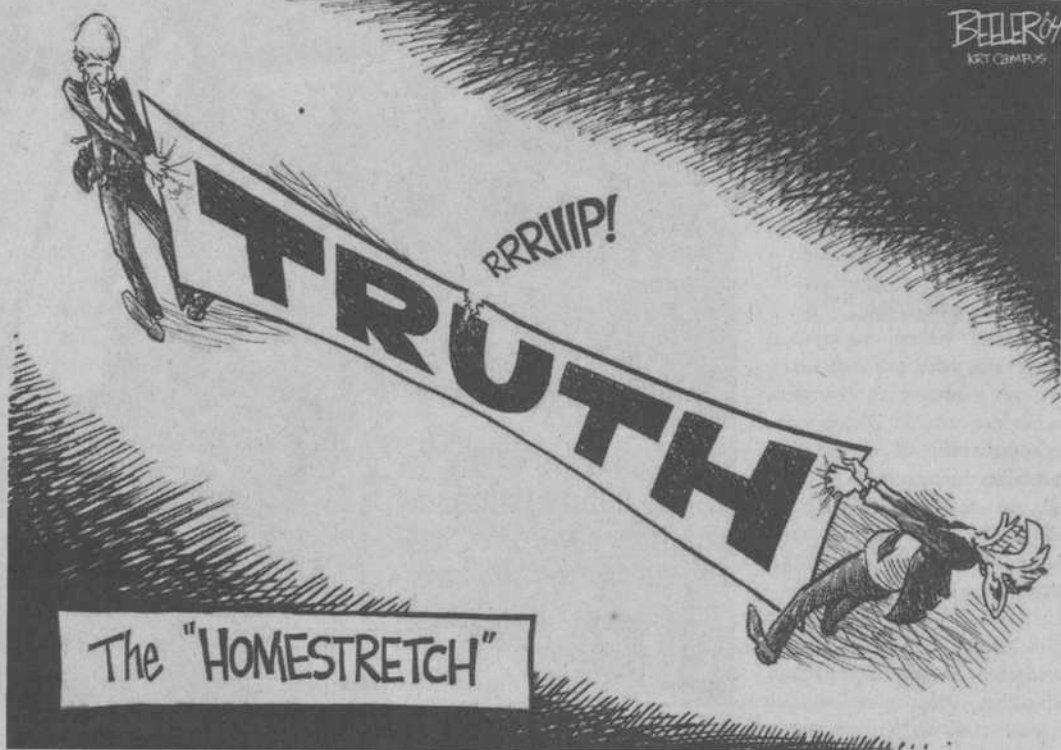
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CARTOON COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

A defense of George W. Bush's record

From the economy to the war on terror, Bush is my choice

Given that Election Day is less than a week away, for the sake of clarity and out of the exigency of the subject, this week I'm going to refrain from my usual satirical derision and present my case plainly — my defense of President Bush against common criticisms.

Evidently, there were some who took my "Bush Sucks" column at face value. Let me state now that I strongly approve of Bush's handling of the economy. I grow weary of the gloom and doom leftists who fabricate economic problems and pass them off as truth. Let us for a moment forsake catchy hate-rhetoric and look at the facts. We were in recession from March until November 2001.

This recession was forecasted toward the end of the Clinton administration, and the fact is that it was coming regardless of who would take office in 2001; Bush was not responsible for it.

Even after the 9/11 attacks, under the Bush administration, we regained some economic momentum and were out of recession early November. Since Bush has taken office, the real GDP has risen nearly 1 trillion dollars. Although initially a trillion dollars doesn't seem impressive relative to the degree of expansion in



CURTIS CHOW
FOURTH-YEAR ECONOMICS STUDENT

the latter '90s, I submit that it is considerable considering an eight-month recession followed by an unprecedented terrorist attack.

The Bush administration has seen 13 consecutive months of positive job creation, including more than 1.5 million new jobs in 2004 and a decrease in the unemployment rate from 6.3 to 5.4 percent. As a point of reference, Clinton's popularly acclaimed record included eight consecutive months of positive job creation, more than 2 million jobs in 1996 and an unemployment rate that dropped from 5.8 percent to 5.2 percent.

For those of you who, after reading this, will immediately blame Bush for only helping the rich, let me point out that the proportion of the population below the poverty line has dropped from 12.7 to 12 percent since he's taken office, and the aggregate national disposable income has risen by approximately \$1.18 trillion.

As for the "unjust war" in Iraq, I think Clinton stated it best in 1998: "If Saddam can cripple the weapons

inspections system and get away with it, he would conclude the international community, led by the United States, has simply lost its will. He will surmise that he has free rein to rebuild his arsenal of destruction. And some day, make no mistake, he will use it again, as he has in the past."

Make no mistake that Saddam Hussein was indeed crippling the weapons inspections systems — defying Security Council resolutions and undermining the IAEA and UNSCOM's abilities to conduct unfettered inspections. Bush took action in 2003 as Clinton did in 1998, both with non-U.N. coalition forces.

As for WMDs, it is unsurprising to me that the mainstream media has failed to report on official United Nations reports, which found Saddam shipped out WMD components as well as medium-range ballistic missiles before, during and after the war. They also seemed to turn a blind eye to the discovery of sarin nerve gas in roadside bombs. But all this information aside, let me say resolutely that we have found and secured one WMD — Saddam Hussein, a ruthless dictator who murdered up to five times as many people as the Hiroshima blast by some estimates.

Needless to say, my vote next Tuesday will be cast for Bush. I would strongly encourage you to do the same.

IN YOUR OPINION

SEC rivals cheering for Gamecock win

I never thought I'd say this but — go Gamecocks! I am a senior at the University of Georgia and a long-time Georgia fan. But this week, tens of thousands of other Bulldog fans and myself will be cheering for the Gamecocks. I'm sure that most of you are well aware why we will all be rooting for you.

We hate Tennessee and everything orange, for that matter. If you don't understand our rivalry, just think of how you feel about Clemson. That's how Georgia fans feel about Tennessee. If the Gamecocks beat the Vols, that helps the Dawgs in the SEC race.

Now, I know you're probably thinking, "Why would we want to help our rival, Georgia?" Well, it is in the interests of Carolina fans to win this game as well. A win over a Top 15 team will likely help the Gamecocks break into the Top 25. This will also be your sixth win of the season. That means your team is eligible for a bowl bid with several games left.

I mean, how many of you don't want your team to be 6-2, ranked in the Top 25 and set up for a possible second place finish in the SEC East? Sounds good, huh? And we know Lou Holtz has still got some quality wins in him. I mean, after all, his Gamecocks came very close to

beating us in Columbia. Gamecocks, know that you have thousands of fans right across the state line pulling for you and your team this Saturday. We know that you hate the color orange as much as we do. So go out there and beat those Vols! Go Cocks!

CHASE CAIN
Fourth-year broadcast news student
University of Georgia

USC sports legends deserve recognition

I would like to commend Alex Riley for his column in The Gamecock ("It's time to recognize Gamecock heritage," Wednesday) for bringing attention to a long forgotten piece of the USC pie. The university has ignored its sports heritage for generations, and I suspect it will continue to do so.

It has been reported in The State that when asked why former Gamecock players, now professionals, had not returned to their alma mater, the response was that they were never asked to come back or that they never felt "welcome" to come back. It seems to have these new millionaires and future USC Hall of Fame inductees feel as if they are a part of the family would be a simple PR marketing decision. The old saying goes that if you kick a dog, he will go away and

not return.

By ignoring their past, the university is missing not only a new, untapped revenue stream but also the ability to showcase a heritage that is rich and full of greatness. From a recruiting standpoint, USC will never stack up against competing schools with halls of fame currently in place.

For many years, USC has been led by people who are not USC grads. Therefore, they have no emotional ties to USC and cannot see the advantage of spending what it takes to get such a display started. Yet, if a survey was conducted of schools that display their sports heritage, I am confident the results would show that spending the dollars has made good sense.

The Gamecock athletic profile continues to rise. Dust off those old trophies in closets, call those former athletes and do whatever it takes to show that USC has a conscience and is proud of the contributions of Gamecocks past, so as to build for the greatness of the Gamecock future.

MIKE SAFRAN
Class of '83

Submission Policy

Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words and include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. E-mail letters to gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu. Letters will be edited. Anonymous letters will not be published. Call the newsroom at 777-7726 for more information.

S.C. needs responsive leadership in Senate

Our tradition demands an independent-minded member of U.S. Senate

For nearly four decades, South Carolina has been represented in the U.S. Congress by Sens. Strom Thurmond and Fritz Hollings — leaders who understood that South Carolina's strength lies in her proud tradition of independence.



INEZ TENENBAUM
U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE, DEMOCRAT

Today, I am asking the people of South Carolina to support me in continuing that tradition — by once again choosing a senator who will not be a foot soldier for any political party but who will always put South Carolina first.

The campaign for U.S. Senate is not about me. It's about electing a senator who will put partisanship aside and put our state first.

It's about the 70,000 South Carolinians who have lost their jobs in the past three years, thanks to bad tax policies and bad trade agreements that have sent our good jobs overseas. I will work to create new jobs by investing in training, research and development. And I promise that no new trade agreement will get my vote if it puts South Carolinians out of work.

This campaign is also about standing up for families. South Carolina's families need a tax cut, not a tax hike. And while a 23 percent federal sales tax, as Jim DeMint has proposed, might sound good in Washington, it's going to cause serious pain for families here at home.

This campaign is about our children. Our schools have made tremendous progress over the past six years, but Washington is breaking its promises to our children. They said they would "Leave No Child Behind," but then they left \$6 billion behind. I will work every day to make sure that education is a shining path to a brighter future, not a road paved with broken promises.

Half a million South Carolinians will go to bed tonight without health insurance. I will work to break the partisan logjam in Congress and make health care more affordable and accessible for children and families in South Carolina. And no matter what risky schemes others propose, I will fight to protect Social Security — not privatize it.

Finally, I strongly support our troops in Iraq and I believe we must do everything in our power to win the war on terrorism.

The differences in this election couldn't be clearer. Jim DeMint wants to raise taxes on 95 percent of South Carolinians. I want to cut taxes on the middle class. Jim DeMint wants to give permanent "most favored nation" trading privileges to China. I want to make America our "most favored nation" again. Jim DeMint wants to invest Social Security funds in the stock market, which helps Wall Street. I want to protect Social Security — and help Main Street.

This election is not about whose team you're on. It's about whose side you're on. And when I wake up every morning as your next senator, South Carolinians can count on me to be on their side.

I have great hope for the future of South Carolina. And together as one state, one people, with one purpose, we can accomplish just about anything.

The Gamecock gave Republican U.S. Senate candidate Jim DeMint the opportunity to write a column, but the campaign decided to "willfully decline."

WINNERS AND SINNERS



VOTERS Voter registration numbers increase by almost 50,000 in South Carolina.

RIVERBANKS ZOO Local zoo announces the birth of its first koala baby.

S.C. HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES Student test scores rise on a mandatory exam, which is tied to graduation.



NUCLEAR PLANT SUPERVISOR Worker at Oconee Nuclear Station discharges 10,000 gallons of contaminated water.

FLU SHOT DEFICIT Illness-prone college students feel the sniffles coming on.

CUBA Refuses to accept U.S. dollars, government takes a 10 percent cut on all money sent from the United States. Way to go, Castro.