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THE GAMECOCK

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The Gamecock is the editorially independent student newspaper of the University of South Carolina. It is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and nine times during the summer, with the exception of university holidays and exam periods. Opinions expressed in The Gamecock are those of the editors or author and not those of the University of South Carolina. The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of The Gamecock. The Office of Student Media is the newspaper's parent organization. The Gamecock is supported in part by student-activity fees. One free copy per reader. Additional copies may be purchased for \$1 each from the Office of Student Media.

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IN OUR OPINION

Supreme Court dodges drug legalization issue

The Supreme Court's decision Monday to invalidate a California law that allowed doctors to prescribe marijuana to chronically ill patients for medical use is a perfect example of judicial overreaching. Conservatives have long complained that federal judges annex power that is reserved to Congress, but the six-to-three decision improperly used the commerce clause, which permits Congress to regulate trade across state lines, to undermine laws in 10 states that allowed limited use of marijuana under a physician's observation.

While current federal law states there is no accepted medical use for marijuana in the United States, the logic employed in the majority opinion circumvents the issue of marijuana's legality entirely. States may not have the right to write laws that countermand federal statutes, but the justices were not asked to address this issue. Instead of delineating the rights of doctors to act within the law in their patients' best interest, the high court effectively ended the public debate over decriminalization of marijuana. Congress is the correct venue for such a discussion, and a re-examination of the United States' stance on drug use and prevention is long past due.

English-only classes deny American roots

Do you remember Spike Lee's "School Daze"? Released in 1988, it is actually the second feature film on his jointography list. One of my favorite films, "School Daze" was a movie about the intra-race prejudices that existed on the college campus. Whether it is or was truly a problem, Lee left the viewer with a lot to think about. At the end of the movie, the character played by Laurence Fishburne ended the movie by running through campus screaming for everyone to "wake up!"



STACY GREGG
Third-year interdisciplinary studies student

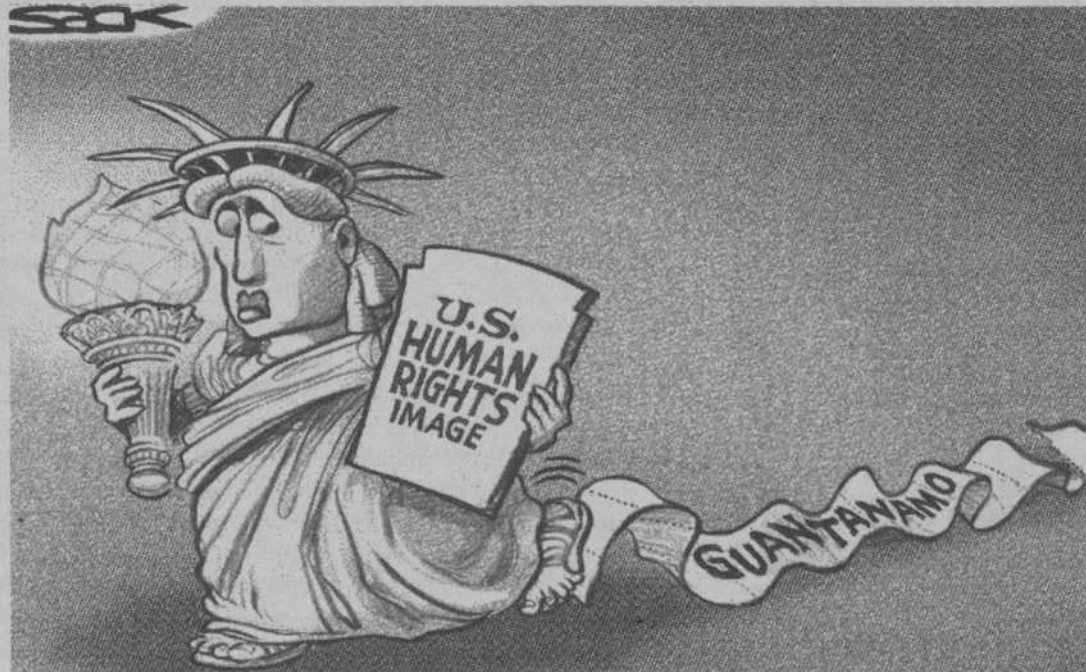
This morning as I was catching up on some editorials in the local newspaper, I had the same urge. There was a letter to the editor from a gentleman who was upset after reading an article about recent GED recipients who were allowed to take the test in Spanish. I

gathered that his arguments were that (1) he felt Americans couldn't go to any other country and take their tests in our native languages, (2) as citizens of South Carolina and also America, our hard-earned money shouldn't have to fund this type of program, and (3) we are funding the program at the expense of our "our own identity as English-speaking Americans."

What? Why, in 2005, do we have to be subjected to this type of attitude? Don't get me wrong — I know that as humans we are all entitled to our own opinions. As Americans, we are even entitled to voice our opinions publicly — but did the newspaper really have to print it?

What happened to the so-called "melting pot" of American society? Think — the first settlers to establish colonies didn't speak the same language as the natives. In fact, considering the fact that the first settlements were formed by people who came from all over Europe, I am inclined to believe that the first settlers didn't speak the same language as each other. Furthermore, I believe that our identity as Americans is based on the mixture of many different languages and cultures.

I went back and found the article. I wasn't surprised to find that the students did in fact speak English. In fact, one was even quoted in the article. It is sad to me that we still have a problem with race and ethnicity. What difference does it make that a person chooses to express him- or herself in a foreign tongue? What ever happened to America, the land of opportunity? It seems to me that we still have a lot of waking up to do.



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