

Letters to the editor

Politics control everything

Dear Editor in Chief,

I'm sorry to hear that you are politically illiterate. I was that way too. I hated politics, I felt that government was just a word and that politicians couldn't get anything done and that their salaries were a waste of money.

I didn't understand why we learned the constitution made centuries ago by white men. I didn't understand why the government couldn't just print more money to pay off the deficit. I didn't understand why welfare wasn't reformed. I didn't understand why we have two central parties in Congress. I could go on forever.

Because of a general education requirement, I took political science 001 and enjoyed it, and plan on taking more, maybe even minoring in political science. I watch CNN on occasion and I'm an English major! I feel I can succeed as a journalist, especially with a good knowledge of politics.

I'm sorry you feel your "future does not depend on [those] facts," because they do. Politics is not just about Presidency and Congress, it's everyday life, choosing a college, a roommate, and even being editor of a newspaper. If you think politics don't affect you, you're wrong.

Are you saying you wouldn't care if

your rights were taken away or if you couldn't get school loans, if schools were segregated again, or even if you couldn't have written the article in the first place. I'm sorry, but if it weren't for politics, I would be a slave.

I'm a strong minded middle class black girl in college that will make a difference in this world and the political scheme. If our generation has your attitude, we don't have a future. I guess we'll just run rampant without any laws and expect someone else to take care of us.

I have never toured the White House, but I will be in it someday.

Joneatra D. Henry
06 English

On political angst

Dear Editor,

A response to Political Angst

When the founding fathers of this country created our government, their greatest challenge was to keep its ruling body accessible to the everyday person. Between the industrial revolution and our country's technological advances in the past 50 years, politicians who are supposed to be the voice of the government have put themselves on a pedestal closing the government off to an elite few. Although we live in the greatest country in the world (and pay an obscene amount of taxes to keep the government running), the political system has continually taken strides to displace the average citizen and their role in the government.

Party campaigns are built on a series of half truths, changing opinions and flat out lies. The diversification of this country (since the government's inception) has made it nearly impossible for a candidate to build a campaign and stick to it. As a result, the lay people in the United States cannot keep up with the ever changing stories and opinions. While the traveling circus known as the United States government and this year's 1996 campaign trail is out on tour, the average men and women in this country are forced to make

a living. Unable to participate in the daily government hubbub, in most of our lives the government has been reduced to a nightcap on the evening news. It is during this evening nightcap that our government has become nothing more than a great source of info-tainment. Unfortunately, this is not what our founding fathers had in mind and this is not the reason that we pay millions of dollars to keep this corrupt institution running.

The government's demise over the past century seems to go hand in hand with the drop of political literacy in this country. It is true that a bunch of college-aged kids would rather be sitting around playing with their portable Nintendo Gameboys, but with all negative feedback floating around the government like a black cloud, what role would you want to play? There is no encouragement to participate because there are too many chefs in the kitchen. There is no reason to pay attention to the government because rarely do they get anything accomplished.

In the past 125 years, the government with all of its checks and balances has become nearly as bad as our founding fathers feared. While these "great" men succeeded in keeping the power from an elite few who could corrupt it, they instead

created an institution that is so large with so political diversity, with the need for a majority opinion before anything can get passed, it has corrupted itself.

It is no wonder that you find yourself politically illiterate with no regrets. You are no different from what has rapidly become a majority in this country. I would imagine the short-term implications are going to be pretty severe: many brilliantly gifted people who might be considering a career in politics are probably more apt to shy away rather than cut through red tape for their entire careers. Being the largest lull in American politics since the signing of The Declaration of Independence, it will be interesting to see how our country looks back on the latter part of American History in the 21st century. Unfortunately at this time, with our current political arrangements, this future looks pretty bleak.

In 1989, Michael Stipe, the lead singer of R.E.M., asked, "Should we talk about the weather? Should we talk about the government?" Six years later I'd have to say, "The weather Michael, definitely the weather!"

EJL
Baltimore, MD

America is a democracy

Dear Editors of the Collegian,

I could not help noticing the article in the last issue of the Collegian, Politically Illiterate (and proud). I was greatly disturbed after reading this article, after all I am an active member in the political system that governs over this country, for those who are unaware America is a "democracy." I do not have enough space to explain what a democracy is so I will leave that for you to research. My first comment would be in response to the article's suggestion that only Young Republicans participate in politics, I would have to strongly disagree. I, personally am a Democrat who participates in local, state, and federal politics. I am also an active member of the Student Government. That is the student organization that tries to perform different activities that will benefit the student body.

My second comment would have to be in response to the idea that "a sweet little 'ole middle class Protestant white girl in

college does not make that big of a difference in the entire political scheme." Well your vote and participation does matter, take for instance the 1994 Congressional Election in Connecticut's Second District which was won by Sam Gejdenson by a mere 21 votes. I think Mr. Gejdenson believes that every vote counts. You may say who cares that is in Connecticut, "I live in Pa. and attend a state funded school." If that is your attitude, well then, I have an answer to that, take for instance Erie's own Phil English, who by the way is up for reelection, he won his campaign by 2%. Do not forget that Mr. English is supposed to make efforts at making Pa. a better place, by bringing jobs to Pa., therefore creating more state tax money which in turn effects your tuition. Now is the idea of political awareness important to you?

If you would like I could begin discussing the international impact the **IGNORANCE** could have on the future

of America. But I will not trouble you with all that information, after all those historical facts are worthless in some Americans minds. My final point is that if America is to have any say in the way the world is run in the 21st century, people better begin to develop a new attitude, that idea of who cares is pure stupidity. I am not trying to give a lecture on the greatness of America, but when citizens are given the ability to express their opinion about the government of their country and they choose not to, I have a problem.

Sincerely,
Michael Zampetti
02 History

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Jennifer Heilman

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