

OPINION

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. - The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Bolton the bully?

By Chris Brown
copy editor

Politics claimed its latest casualty last week when the United States' representative to the United Nations (UN), John Bolton, announced his resignation after it became clear that a filibuster in the Senate would block his confirmation. He was President Bush's recess appointment to the position in 2005. Bolton is one of the best representatives the U.S. has had in years and his absence will be felt greatly in American diplomacy.

Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) is one of the most outspoken critics of Bolton. Dodd and other critics constantly referred to Bolton as a "bully" whose tactics were ineffective in the UN. That's not completely accurate. Bolton's bullying did get some things accomplished. This includes drafting a proposal in the Security Council that approved sanctions against North Korea, unanimous nonetheless, and that many pundits gave little chance of passage. Bolton also brokered the Security Council resolution ending Israel's war against Hezbollah last summer, a unanimous vote, as well. He also forced the UN, an organization dedicated to peace and human rights, to hold deliberations on Burma's human rights abuses and the genocide in Darfur against Christians.

Bolton was not very well liked in the UN, a testament that he must have been doing something right in an organization that appears to be doing so much wrong. The UN is rampant with corruption and Bolton embodied all of its deficiencies: straight-forwardness, honesty, and principles. This is the organization whose Human Rights Council was headed by Libya and Sudan, two countries whose history shows a complete lack of respect for humanity. This is just the surface of the problem. When reports of UN forces organizing rape squads for sub-teenage girls in Congo surfaced, the UN tried to look away, but Bolton was not going to have any of it. No one can blame him for not mincing words and playing the diplomacy game when those allegations appear. And what happened when it was revealed that Kofi Annan's son and other nations took bribes from Saddam Hussein? Nothing happened. Bolton gave the UN credibility and a sense of oversight; without him one can only speculate what else it will get away with.

Bolton was given perhaps the toughest job of any U.S. official. He was given a broken system and told to get as much out of it as he can. He looked out for America's interests in an organization that time and again turns its head away from its largest benefactor, the United States. He led the way for reforms of the UN, despite heated objections from countries already benefiting to the current arrangement. In one of his last public appearances, Bolton displayed some of that diplomatic charm that he was so often accused of lacking by taking the high road and refusing to air his dirty laundry in an exit interview.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

This is concerning the article on the second page of the Beacon concerning Jon Demerecz. I find it offensive that this person, charged with having CHILD PORNOGRAPHY, is painted in a positive light. The guy is a sexual offender, and I thank God he was caught now before his offenses escalated. To sing this person's praises and talk about how dearly he will be missed by all the clubs he was active in is an insult to me, this paper, and this campus. I have a baby brother, and the thought of this guy mas-

turbating to naked pictures of children makes me sick. What was Christopher LaFuria thinking? I understand the right of the freedom of the press, but this was just a garbage article. I feel as though 5 minutes of my life were stolen in reading this trash. This guy's a freak, and I hope he gets a nice long prison sentence where he'll be victimized worse than those poor kids that were forced to make that garbage he gets off to.

Joshua Donolo, Biology '09

Red flags raised on minimum wage

By Jordan Gilmore
sports editor

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will raise its minimum wage requirement from the current federal level of \$5.15 an hour to \$7.15 an hour by July 2007. The purpose of this policy is to allow unskilled entry-level workers to earn a living wage. Proponents of raising the minimum wage argue that it will help this group of workers, which includes many college students, increase their overall annual income, thus making them better off. But will it?

The simple answer to this question is no. There are three factors that will contribute to the failure of this policy. The first is the effect higher wages have on the price level. The second is the level of the federal minimum wage and the level of minimum wages in surrounding states. The third is what effect a higher minimum wage has on the labor market.

With a sweep of both houses of Congress in the November election, Democrats are focusing on raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour. Such a policy would make the Pennsylvania wage increase unnecessary and ineffective. Furthermore, the argument that neighboring states are raising their minimum wages is little more than the playground "everybody else is doing it" excuse to enact policy. Although some workers may move to a neighboring state to take advantage of higher wages, the real effect is that businesses having a majority of their positions at the minimum wage will move into states with lower minimum wages, such as Ohio.

Aside from moving operations, suppliers tend to price their goods at a certain markup over cost. As wages increase, costs to businesses increase, leading to a necessary increase in

prices. Even though the minimum wage may have increased, prices of goods will rise at the same time. This leads to a stagnation of real wages, or wages adjusted for inflation. In effect, there is no gain from the increased wage rate. In fact, wage setting and price setting functions show that the results of an increase in minimum wage will be higher prices and unemployment.

The increase in unemployment can be seen through the labor market as well. Minimum wage is a price floor that doesn't allow the market to reach its efficient level. The efficient level is where everyone looking for a job at the current wage level can find one, and every employer looking to hire at the current wage level can fill his or her openings. The higher wage causes employers to cut back on the number of low skill workers they are willing to hire. This exacerbates the problems faced by workers earning the minimum wage. Instead of increasing their earnings, the policy will cause many to lose their jobs or work fewer hours as employers look to cut costs and not be able to find a new job.

Federal standards and economic forces will cause a policy to increase minimum wage fail to meet its goal of helping low skilled workers. Although those lucky enough to keep their jobs and hours will undoubtedly have larger paychecks, they will not have increased buying power from those dollars. In other words, they will be right back where they started from. Those looking for new jobs will find less openings to fill. And those who lose their jobs will find out that the minimum they can earn is actually zero.

Winter makes driving dangerous

By Patrick Webster
managing editor

As we enter the treacherous winter months in the city of Erie, I'd like to address a topic that everyone likes to complain about from time to time: driving and driver safety.

It's something we've all seen countless times: that guy that suddenly brakes and turns without using his turn signal, the guy that can't parallel park, and the little old lady that makes her dog wear hats, swerving her way down the interstate at a blistering 27 miles per hour. Hardly a day goes by that I don't see someone blatantly breaking traffic laws and creating dangerous situations.

In addition, data collected by the U.S. Department of Transportation shows that, aside from teenage drivers, adults are more and more likely to be involved in traffic accidents as they get older. This could happen for at least two reasons: being less able to drive physically or having a sense of apathy or ignorance towards traffic laws.

Something that I'd like to see enacted is an expiration date on driver's licenses. Not in the manner that they expire now, where you go to get a new picture and update your current license, but where you have to completely re-take your driving test. I'd recommend licenses expiring after period of ten

years, and/or after an accumulation major of minor traffic violations. This would force people to stay mindful of safe driving practices. People play like they practice, and regularly unsafe drivers would be hard pressed to re-pass their driver tests on a lark. Forcing people to retake tests for multiple traffic violations could also reduce their occurrence, as well.

I realize that an issue that could be claimed by opponents is that doing so would threaten the ability of some to sustain their lifestyles. This is irrelevant. People who can't pass the test shouldn't be on road in the first place. This includes older drivers. If they can no longer pass their own unaltered and un-handicapped license test, they should not be on the road either. This would not affect average Americans. The average responsible American should have no problem passing a driver's test once every ten years. If you can complain about having to do something every ten years, you can complain about anything.

On a side note, drivers of trucks and large SUVs have to realize that they are not invincible when driving in inclement weather. I don't care if you're driving a Hummer and you can adjust the tire pressure from your dashboard, the road deserves respect when there is two inches of slush on it. Ultimately, safety isn't merely a concept that should be put aside because many see it as an inconvenience.

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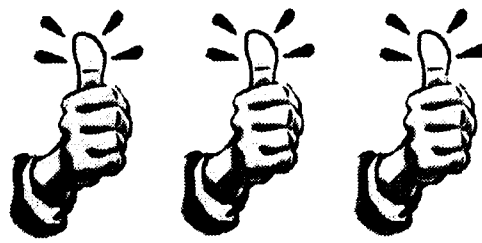
The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to klk5005@psu.edu or directly to the Beacon office, located in the Reed Building.

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries should be limited to 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run the submission.

All submissions must include the writer's year in school, major and name as The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon for inclusion in the Friday issue. All submissions are considered, but because of space limitations, some may not be published.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication.

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Gap scarves
- Turning 21
- Jay-Z coming out of retirement
- Vintage vinyl records
- Burt's Beeswax

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Cold toilet seats
- Bad covers of original songs
- People wearing shorts
- People spreading colds
- Chapped lips



Have a Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?



(check a box)

Submit it to the "Thumbs up-Thumbs Down" box at the RUB desk.