

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

The Behrend Beacon

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THE BEHREND
Beacon



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This week in politics



By Chris Brown
copy editor

This past week Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), and a number of other Democrat Representatives visited Syria and met with President Bashar Assad. The visit immediately drew criticism from President Bush and the White House, they said it would undermine their Middle East policy, which has been working so well over the past few years. Coincidentally, the White House was surprisingly silent when three Republican congressmen visited with Bashar Assad.

Pelosi justified her trip by saying that she was only following the advice of the Iraq Study Group which Bush had ignored completely. One of those recommendations was to open a dialogue with Iraq's neighbors to help find a political solution to the problem. Instead, Bush chose to listen to the same team of advisors that led us to this problem in the first place and continue to stay the course, only this time with more troops on the ground, four years too late.

The Bush administration reminds me of that cry-baby kid on the playground everyone knew growing up. They are the kid that instead of working out differences when a disagreement arises, they just get up, leave and run home refusing to speak to anyone. Essentially, that has been their strategy for the past seven years in the Middle East, because when Iran and Syria don't play by the rules or don't do everything we ask them to, we refuse to speak to

them despite their obvious stake in a stable Middle East.

Pelosi should be applauded for opening dialogue with Syria. She needed to send the message that the Bush strategy foreign policy is not the universal of all politicians in the United States and that there is hope for renewed contact and relations after the 2008 election.

Over the past few years China has been able to keep the value of its currency, the yuan, low enough to promote exports of its manufacturing products to the United States and other countries. By keeping the value low, its products are cheaper than products produced in other countries and thus promote Chinese exports.

Many feel that the Chinese are unfairly keeping the yuan low and that it is taking away manufacturing jobs from the United States and while the Chinese

his insistence that such legislation would have enough votes to over-ride a veto, are just the latest example of what has become widespread protectionist rhetoric and feelings.

Protectionist policies are not a panacea for our domestic troubles, could greatly harm the process of globalization, and hurt our economy in the long run. Despite widespread belief that globalization is inevitable, there is a great risk it could stop or even reverse course because it has happened before. But what about the record levels of integration experienced around the globe? What people don't realize is that these records being broken were last set prior to World War I, when the trend did stop and did reverse.

Protectionism also does little to help the economy, regardless of the claims made by many politicians. When a policy is enacted to protect a domestic industry it often has unforeseen consequences and can drive up inflation. Take the steel tariffs, which the United States was forced to repeal after complaints. The idea was to protect the steel industry in the United States by imposing tariffs that would raise the price of cheaper foreign steel. By doing that, it forced businesses that used steel for their products to raise their prices, which hurt their competition with foreign manufacturers that could purchase cheap steel, so instead of purchasing American steel hubcaps, or steel I-beams, made from cheap foreign steel, we end purchasing foreign made steel products, produced with cheap foreign steel. Not only is protectionism counter-productive to the goal, it also risks global conflict.

Instead of pursuing backwards trade policies to 'level' the playing field, politicians should take this opportunity to educate the public about globalization and its affect on jobs. They should enact policies and programs that actually do help Americans. Policies that promote and fund education after a job loss for blue-collar workers would go a long way in helping ease the fears of globalization for the average American and promote a sustainable trade policy.

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took steps in 2005 to reduce the disparity between the yuan and the dollar, these steps have not gone far enough. So, last week after a Senate Hearing, Charles Schumer (D-NY) signaled that legislation is in the works that would put trade restrictions on China until it revalued its currency and made trade more 'fair.'

The United States has seen a rising trade deficit over the past few years and many Americans have lost their manufacturing jobs to foreign companies that can produce goods cheaper. these factors have influenced the rhetoric of common citizens, newspapers, and politicians. Schumer's comments, and

2007 Student Government Association Elections

President and Vice President: (Choose 1)

President: Ben Gilson - **Vice President:** Erin Kennedy

Secretary: (Choose 1)

Megan Hoffman

CHOICES
Two would be confusing

Jerry Pohl

THUMBS UP



- Seeing your favorite band live
- The new season of South Park
- Thrift stores
- Tax returns
- Road trips
- New York City

THUMBS DOWN

- Snow
- People who drive in oncoming traffic
- That guy
- Those who don't flush public toilets
- Being sick
- Slipping on ice...especially in April



Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to jan219@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.

Hey writers, complainers and thinkers! The Beacon needs writers and editors! Submit any opinions or letters to the editor to jan219@psu.edu. Want to become an editor? Let us know; we're losing editors next semester and we need some help! P.S. Great addition to any resume.

Definition of diversity?

By Theresa Di Buono
staff writer

As I walk outside onto the lovely campus of Penn State Behrend I am surrounded by trees, I feel the bitter cold bite my face and I see a lot of hills, and buildings, and doors. As I walk along this campus I feel like I am doing something wrong. My legs are healthy and my arms are too. I am able to walk up and down hills and open doors and go up steps without ever thinking really how lucky I am to be doing these simple things.

I feel guilty because here I am on one of the most inaccessible campuses for handicapped people. This strikes me as wrong for so many reasons. The school really focuses on building more, renovating, additions, etc, but where are all the ramps? And why don't the "handicapped accessible doors" open within a timely fashion? I am disgusted by the school's lack of concern for people who are not as mobile as I am. I think of all the days I try not to slip trudging my way up to the REDC in the snow and then I think of all the times I struggled to open doors with my hands full. How can a person who is in a wheelchair walk up the steps of Dobbins? How can a person who is physically handicapped in the arms or legs, open doors? Or walk up

the REDC hill? Sometimes I wonder how they even get down to the parking lots when the hills are so steep and they are not in an electric powered wheelchair.

This makes me very upset because no one should be denied an education, especially because they are unable to commute about the campus due to its horrible accommodations for those with physical handicaps.

I hear so much about DIVERSITY this and DIVERSITY that, but how can we be a diverse campus when everyone on it has to be physically well? I know of one young man who seems to manage in a wheelchair, now mind you this is no simple task for him, especially in the winter. He is one of the luckier ones, because he is well equipped with an electric powered wheelchair, which many people are unable to afford, but thank God he can because it is the only way he is able to get around. Sometimes I see this young man in church, his chair covered in dirt, wet snow, and de-icer, which I'm sure all of these things really wear away at one of his most precious commodities. But this young man also seems to have friends to help. He is friendly, outgoing, and kind and he is lucky, not everyone is this lucky.

Diversity is not only about race, ethnicity, gender, but about DIFFERENCES. I am not sure why so much

effort is put into crying over how many male teachers you have, how many are of color, and which ones teach what, when that's not it at all, because to be diverse in a community is to be welcoming, accessible, and accommodating to people of every kind. And if they want to throw diversity out there, then it is time they rethink their little game plan, because apparently they have not taken into consideration everyone. They are so hung up on the past, that they do not see what is already right in front of their faces. I do not see diversity on this campus, because I do not see accommodation for handicapped people. I see a small undertone of it, which is almost to the point of pathetic in its "meeting its requirements" standards.

Some of the world's greatest people had physical handicaps that would have made it nearly impossible for them to attend Penn State Behrend. Alexander Pope, who is greatly regarded for being the best English poet of the 18th century, was born with a hunch back, and could barely dress himself without having someone help. Musical genius Ray Charles was blind. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the only U.S. president elected to four terms, had poliomyelitis which made his legs almost impossible to use. I can't imagine how they would have been able to attend Penn State Behrend.