

PERSPECTIVES

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:

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.

Do we remember?



By Jennifer Juncosa
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Two years ago, Seung-Hui Cho turned on his school and spent April 16 shooting 32 of his classmates and then himself. The Virginia Tech (VT) shooting has been seen as the most devastating school shooting ever.

Two years later, unless you go to VT, it's like it never happened. On the anniversary last year I wore my Penn State "We Remember" shirt in honor of those who were in the shooting. This year, I wore the same shirt but instead of seeing students

wearing the same shirt or the VT colors, I saw nothing in remembrance of the VT shooting.

Even online news sources and newspapers have nothing referring to the shooting; articles are more focused on school safety during the anniversary of the VT shooting and the Columbine shooting, all within four days of each other.

Even though we are not VT or Columbine, we still need to remember events like this. It's not something to forget only two or ten years later.

Most of the attackers had targets in mind. In the Columbine shooting, the attackers were thought to go for their Christian classmates and the "jocks" for mistreating them.

In the VT shooting, Cho walked

into a classroom, shot and killed the professor, and then opened fire on the class. After what he went across the hall and did it to another classroom.

After the Columbine and VT shooting, the media showed that there were warning signs that people hadn't noticed prior to the shootings.

Don't ignore suspicious behavior and if you need help, don't hesitate to go to the personal counseling center in the basement of Reed.

Penn State Erie is considered a safe campus. There has yet to be serious safety threats to the campus and hopefully we can keep it that way.

Let's not forget the anniversaries of Columbine and VT.

Letter from the editor



By Rachel Reeves
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Last week, the Behrend Beacon may have been a victim of newspaper theft. Entire stacks of the newspaper were emptied over Easter weekend, and we estimate that roughly 1000 copies disappeared before Monday morning.

Many people do not know that newspaper theft is actually a crime, even if the publication is free. The fact is, the profits of a newspaper do not come from sales – they come from advertisements. If a certain percentage of newspapers never reaches

its readership, it is expected that the newspaper offer reimbursements to the advertisers. In a case like this, the Beacon could lose hundreds of dollars in one week. A free publication is anything but cheap.

More importantly, newspaper theft is a form of censorship. The Beacon exists to provide an open forum for communication throughout the campus community. We encourage other ideas and we even welcome disagreements with our decisions and policies. Letters to the editor are always an option, and anyone can email one of the staff if they wish to keep their complaints private. As opposed to dumping or removing hundreds of copies of our newspapers, we would hope that our readers express their ideas in an appropriate and effective way.

Letter to the editor: This needs to stop Response to: There is nothing wrong with a road block

My intent was not to criticize Mr. Becker when I wrote my first letter, but to point out the flaws in his theory of why the police had a road block at that specific location, during the collegiate year. Yes, seniors are dangerous drivers, they have bad eye sight, are occasionally forgetful about where they are, and have poor motor control. But when it comes to morals and general obedience of the law, they are better than the "whippersnappers" that are here at Behrend, myself included, at least in the eyes of the police and the insurance companies. Hence the reason why people under the age of 25, i.e. born after 1984, have a higher car insurance rate. You did know that, Right Mr. Wittmershaus?

Totalitarianism: absolute control by the state or a governing branch of a highly centralized institution. Somehow, I just don't think that fits our situation here.

Mr. Wittmershaus, I don't laugh. Not about politics. Not about privacy. Not even when John Stewart makes a snappy remark on The Daily Show. So don't EVER accuse me of having "a good laugh about" totalitarianism. When Mr. Becker used the term he used it far out of context, and in broad generalizations as YOU are doing now.

Checking a drivers license at a traffic stop is nothing compared to the "checking of papers" that occurred during WWII, the internment camps that existed within our own borders. Those are totalitarianism, not a traffic stop.

As for your accusation towards

me, I have never given up my right to privacy in exchange for security. Unfortunately because of how this democracy operates I was not allowed a say in how the country operates until four years ago. When I came of voting age I made the choice I felt was right. Only once, so far, did the rest of America seem to feel the same way I did.

I am also active in the fight against not only government spying but corporate spying. Personal information whether it is by stupidity or malicious intent is inexcusable.

As a side note, Mr. Wittmershaus, I hope since you are so adamant about privacy over security that when you had the opportunity to vote you too made a decision that would not have put us back in the same eight year cycle.

Mr. Wittmershaus, unlicensed drivers, where do I begin? How about this, you say there is no "correlation or causation." However, if a driver was licensed at one point and accumulated citations and fines on their license, they to have it suspended or revoked. They then have only their willpower and fear of getting caught to stop them from driving. Using random "road blocks", the police can make sure the ones who are violating the law for whatever the reason, are stopped.

Out of date inspections: do you realize what an inspection does? They make sure your car isn't about to fall apart. Basically, does it have working brakes, headlights, tail-lights, turn signals, wipers, and an engine? That kind of stuff, it also

makes sure you aren't polluting the environment too much. Keeping it up to date lets them know you actually maintain it to a degree. As to hasty generalizations about sociopaths and Ohio, that's all you my friend.

I don't think I "mocked" Mr. Becker's suggestion that the state police were trying to make a quick buck off some college students. I did, however point out that about 200 yards away is a "speedway" of sorts. The Bayfront connector (sometimes channels the Autobahn) and for police it could be an easy week's worth of tickets if they wanted to. Mr. Wittmershaus, if you read Mr. Becker's letter you'd remember that it was a traffic stop/road block. Meaning all or almost all cars were being stopped on that stretch of road. Now maybe Mr. Becker had expired inspection stickers, out of date tags, or they just picked him because they liked his car.

I don't know, I wasn't there. I do know this, all yours and Mr. Becker's anger and frustration over a simple traffic stop in Erie, Pennsylvania could be put to much better use. You both seem to dislike the "overbearing" Big Brother government. Well then do something about it. Quit complaining about a stupid traffic stop and start looking at the big picture.

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Letter to the editor: Do we have too many police?

A slogan at the top of the Pennsylvania State Police website states that their goal is: "To seek justice, preserve peace, and improve the quality of life for all." However, some of their activities have nothing whatsoever to do with this goal.

I bring this up because recently it seems that the police have nothing better to do than cite college students for underage drinking and harass students with "traffic safety checks" on campus. I understand that underage drinking is against the law and that police are expected to enforce the law. However, I cannot believe that police do not have more serious issues to address.

In places with high crime rates, the police are too busy doing their job to bother citing college students for underage drinking. This leads me to believe that police in Erie do not have enough to do, so perhaps we need a few less police officers.

According to a website encouraging people to join the state police, the starting salary for a trooper is \$50,740 dollars. If we were to cut a few of these jobs, we would save quite a bit of tax payer's money

(which could be put towards teaching kids how to drink responsibly) and it would encourage the remaining officers to spend their time fighting real crimes.

Underage drinking is a victimless crime, and there are far better things for police (who are paid by our tax dollars) to be doing with their time that do not involve harassing college students. I realize that many people believe underage drinking is dangerous. However, by strictly penalizing underage drinkers it is only pushed underground making it less likely for someone who has had too much to drink to seek help. In the end, it seems like if harassing college students for drinking underage is all the police have to do, perhaps we do not need quite as many police officers.

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The Beacon is always looking for more writers.

Have an opinion? Want to write about sports? Want to get a front row seat to an event? Want to write about movies or music? Like to take pictures?

All you have to do is email any of the editors, stop by the Beacon office in the basement of Reed, or submit articles online at the-behrendbeacon.com

Universal healthcare plan isn't the answer SUBMISSIONS FROM PROFESSOR NESBIT'S PUBLIC ECONOMICS COURSE

By Zach Herd
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Over the past fifty years, the amount of health care paid for by the United States government has grown at an alarming rate. In 1950 the government only paid 25% of healthcare expenses. Currently, the government pays 46% of healthcare expenses. There are several reasons this percentage has grown in the past half century. One is that America has a growing elderly population that needs more medical attention. This leads to increased costs for the government through Medicare, which is the public insurance program for the elderly. While the elderly population also needs more healthcare attention than most people, the elderly population also has a stronger political voice than most groups. When it comes to Election Day the elderly

population has the opportunity to vote without many other inconveniences holding them back, like kids or a work schedule. The elderly population continues to grow and they remain politically organized, however politicians continue to relax the standards to qualify for Medicare. While we may think politicians lower these standards because they truly care about the health of the American public, it is more likely that they care more about being reelected, and to be elected they have to keep their constituents satisfied. This has led them to loosen the standards to qualify as elderly or as poor, and as a result, more and more of the middle class qualify for these benefits. With a greater number of people qualifying, demand for medical services goes up, which also leads to increased prices. The increased prices combined with a larger number of recipient's leads to higher government expenditures.

Whether we pay for these expenditures now or in the future, at some point are taxes will have to rise to cover these expenses and the people will pay for it.

When the out of pocket price for a consumer is reduced, they will consume more of that product. Imagine you usually allocate \$30 to go out to eat at Texas Longhorn once a week. If you received a coupon for half off every one of your meals at Texas Longhorn, you would be more likely to go out to eat at Texas Longhorn more than once a week and consume more than you would if you were paying the full price every time.

This same idea applies to healthcare; if you don't have to pay the full price of your check up visits, medicine, or surgery you will be much more likely to consume more of those items than if you had to pay the full price yourself. The lowered out of pocket prices will once again increase the demand for medical

services and cause another increase in the cost of medical care.

Over the past several years the restrictions for Medicare have been extremely relaxed, President Obama's healthcare plan proposes relaxing the restrictions to qualify for Medicaid, the other public insurance program that is for the poor. When a greater number of people are included in the coverage, the government will have to increase their spending to pay the health expenses the new recipients incur. I think Americans deserve to be healthy, but throwing government dollars at all aspects of healthcare is not the most efficient way to achieve this. The government should not be involved in areas of healthcare like check-ups, surgery, and general medication. There are a large number of people out there that consume these products due to the reduced costs who otherwise could get by without them. This over-consumption leads

to increased demand, which results in increased prices. These increased prices are felt by the rest of the American public through either increased out of pocket prices for them, increased insurance prices, or increased taxes.

The burden of a high amount of unnecessary medical attention should not fall on the American public. If the government focused its money at medical research and contagious disease protection, our country would be better off. The benefits of medical research and contagious disease protection aren't always felt by a consumer so people tend to spend less money on them. The benefits of a flu shot or cancer research are never fully felt by the individual consumer. With government intervention in these two areas we could see benefits that could lead to an overall healthier and a more efficient healthcare system.

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Knitting
- Fighting Dr. Doom
- Greek Awards
- The All American Rejects

Submission Guidelines:

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries 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 it.

The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Please include your major, faculty or administration position, and semester standing. Deadline for any submission is 8 p.m. Wednesday night for inclusion in the Friday issue.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication. Please keep complaints as specific as possible.

Email submissions to jdj5061@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.

Beacon Thumbs Down



- April showers
- Pens running dry
- Impending final exams
- Sold out concert tickets