

OPINION

# IFC takes big step for diversity

Penn State, you have come a long way in the past eight years. Of course there have been technological advances, course changes and many other new systems implemented at the university, but the most important changes have come in acceptance. In 2002, Penn State's chapter of the fraternity for gay and progressive men, Delta Lambda Phi closed because of lack of membership. Last year, however, students re-colonized to bring the fraternity back to Penn State, and after a six-month-long pursuit, it has

earned IFC affiliation for the first time. The decision shows a step in the right direction for the Interfraternity Council and Penn State in general. After easily earning the required two-thirds approval of IFC presidents Tuesday, Delta Lambda Phi is officially a recognized member. The 29 members and 11 pledges of the chapter as well as IFC President Max Wendkos are excited about the decision, hoping the greek and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community and its allies (LGBTA) will be able to strengthen their relation-

ships. The recognition of Delta Lambda Phi will allow the fraternity to be more involved in events like Homecoming and THON. The LGBTA community will also become more visible, allowing for more recognition and collaboration with all of Penn State's fraternities, sororities and other groups. Open minds and open hearts allowed for this to happen, and the IFC should be applauded and the newest member congratulated. You have come a long way, Penn State. Let's continue to move forward.

# Honesty trumps consistency in unbiased news

By Kevin Zieber

WE make critical choices every time we seek out information; where to look, what medium to pledge allegiance toward and what do we really hope to get out of it? Unfailing, near the top of the follow-up questions people ask me after discovering I am a journalist is the question of bias and objectivity. "Who is the most biased?" or "Who is the least biased?" and more often than not, "Where do you get your news?" Each is a loaded question with an equally loaded answer. Though there will never be a definite and singular solution to any of these questions, there are red flags that tell you plenty about the legitimacy of a news source. The famous investigative journalist I.F. Stone wrote that journalists can be either consistent or honest. If they choose consistency, they will inevitably bend the truth to do so. Some media are fixated on sensationalist minutiae that do little to inform us, opting instead to weave a narrative that suits the ideology of their producers. It's not hard to find examples of how certain facts are omitted and altogether ignored in the interest of maintaining consistency. Take Fox News, or any other conservative news outlet, for instance. Clearly its narrative is that President Barack Obama is taking over everything and bankrupting the nation at such an alarming rate that armed revolt may be necessary, if not imminent. Given that this is the network line, it's doubtful one would hear Obama's campaign promises to lower federal taxes for 95 percent of working families actually did come to fruition. A CBS/New York Times poll released in mid-February showed that only 12 percent of Americans believe Obama has lowered taxes. Among the Tea Party movement, which is made up largely of Fox viewers, only 2 percent believe that taxes have decreased. Not only that, but a staggering 44 percent of the tea partiers believe that taxes increased. Fox's reporting techniques play a crucial role in skewing the perspective of its viewers with its predisposition to report news after sanitizing it to meet the station's conservative ideology. The disconnect between reality and the network's viewers is no accident but rather the result of Fox's desperate attempt to keep its enemies consistent. When a news station's viewers are so poorly informed, we must assign a sizable amount of blame to the stunningly low quality of the information they receive. Cable outlets of all stripes are guilty of this self-censoring, but not quite to the egregious extremes of Fox. The news organizations that overtly tailor the news to fit the narrow boundaries of their ideologies choose consistency over truth. As long as Fox and its cable news peers MSNBC and CNN have vested interests in playing party politics with no real mechanism for fact-checking, we continue seeing polls with a dismal amount of voters possessing any idea of the truth. No longer can heated, unconstructive exchanges between opposing pundits be passed for objectivity. The truth is much too important to be left to media celebrities and mouthpieces of corporate interest. Cable news will not make us better citizens, nor will it improve our understanding of the world in any honest way. In the corporate media landscape, ratings battles and bottom-lines always trump your need to know. If we are ever to improve our lives and ourselves, we must endlessly look in new directions for information.



MY OPINION

## THE DAILY Collegian

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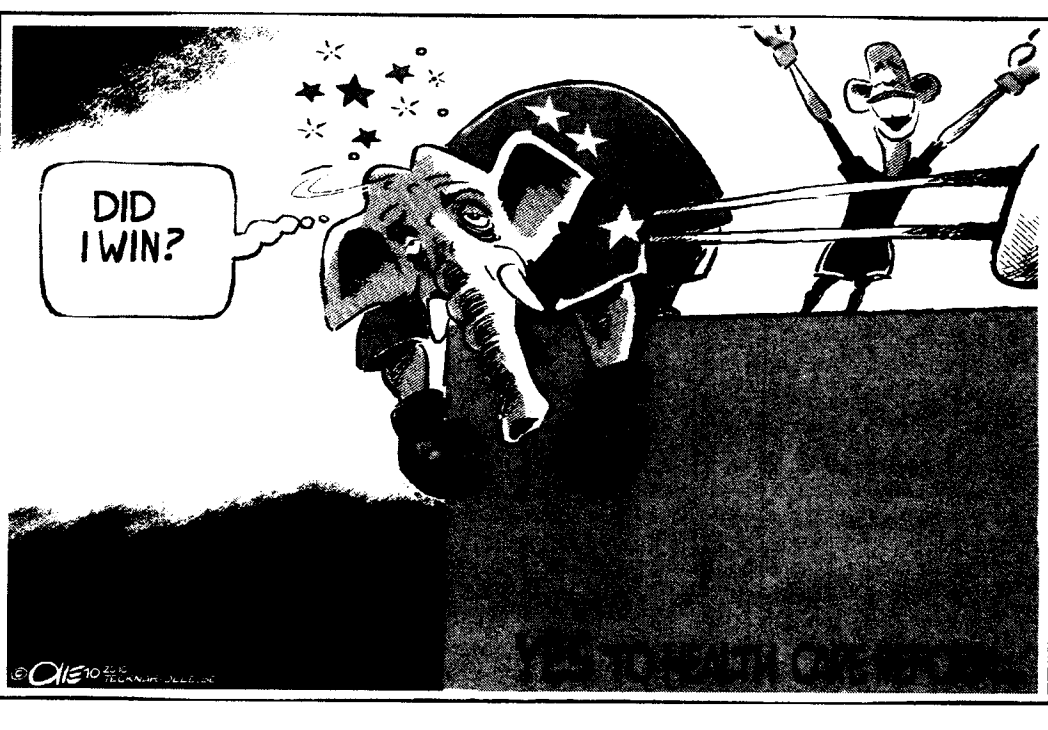
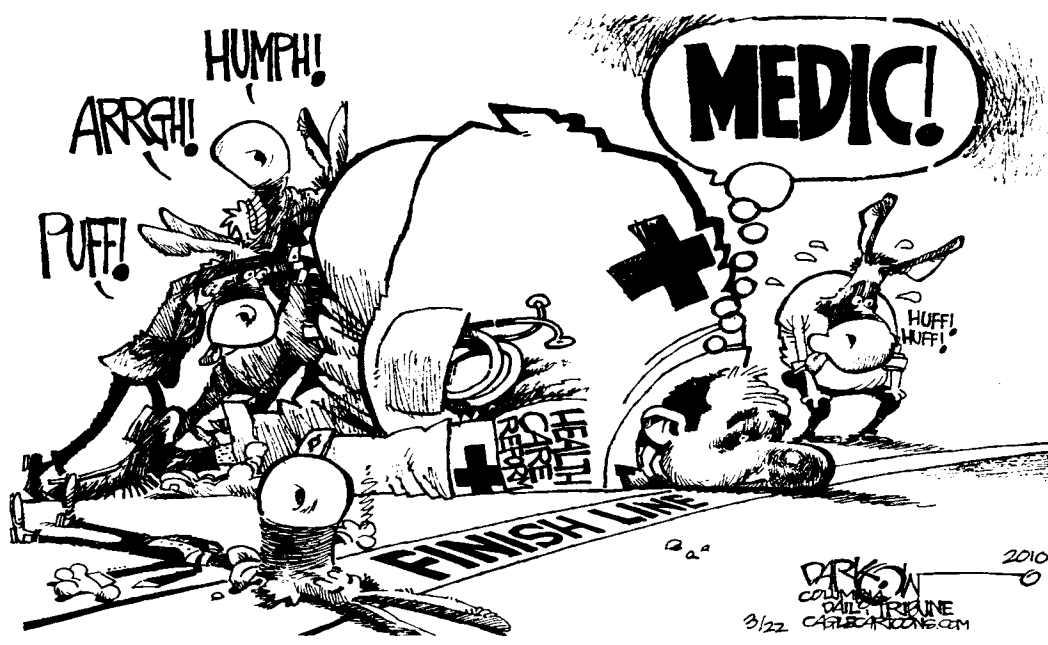
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# Dems take good risk with health care

By Kevin Sullivan

PEOPLE often lament a certain homogeneity in American politics that comes out of an electorate forced to confine to one of two philosophies. Over the past year, however, as opinions have had the time to ferment as the current health care reform legislation has been debated in Washington, voices of innumerable stripes have slowly crawled out from the cracks. Case in point: the epithets tossed at congressmen by protesters Sunday afternoon. Republican Congressman Devin Nunes of California went on television defending these people, saying, "When you use totalitarian tactics, people begin to act crazy. And I think, y'know there's people that have every right to say what they want." I'm not sure how it could be considered totalitarian for democratically elected officials to vote on legislation that represents the sort of stances they campaigned on. I have a life, so I haven't myself read the actual bill, but from the outlines I've seen, I think it's likely to be transformational in American history. I don't think this because I can now mooch my broke ass off my parents' health plan for four more years. I don't think this because, though not an actual clause in the bill, its passage apparently includes the self-imposed banishment of talk radio host Rush Limbaugh, who said on his March 8 show, "I'll just tell you



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this, if this passes and it's five years from now and all that stuff gets implemented — I am leaving the country. I'll go to Costa Rica." Which is strange; the country has a nationalized universal health care system. I also don't think the legislation will be a landmark because it will somehow put our country on a slippery slope toward some Orwellian scenario. The bill is not a takeover of one-sixth of the economy, as many like to say. There is no public option or single-payer plan. In fact, the bill does not create a new program. Instead, it only subsidizes private plans. Furthermore, even if a universal plan was created, the government already accounts for almost half of the health care market. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, in 2008, government-run programs made up 47.3 percent of health spending to the private sector's 52.7 percent in 2008. This situation isn't solely the doing of progressives either. During the '90s, when Republicans controlled the House for six years, the amount of private health spending dropped by more than 10 percent, and George Bush's prescription drug benefit program helped further the trend as well. While the effects of the new policy will certainly be noticeable by many, I would say that the political effects of such a piece of legislation could be just as, if not more so, apparent, and largely in the favor of Democrats. Republicans have enjoyed boasting about how passage of this bill would reflect in this year's elections to their benefit. They're probably right. But as conservative author and former

Bush speechwriter David Frum points out, one election is hardly compensation for the major Democratic victory. The Republican Party went all out on destroying the bill completely, and it failed. In doing so, it had less influence than it could have on the bill. The other effect is the long-term gain this will score Democrats, in terms of their long problem with branding and self-imaging. After the Kennedy assassinations in the 1960s, the Democrats never seemed to regain their swagger and slowly became more and more timid and, well, conservative. Richard Nixon won re-election by a landslide 49 states in 1972. Jimmy Carter lost in '76 after coming across as weak during the Iran hostage affair. And he lost to an unelectable Hollywood nut, who would become a conservative hero. To combat this dichotomy, a group called the Democratic Leadership Council formed in the 1980s with a goal of bringing triangulation, the act of presenting an ideology in the middle of the political spectrum. After Clinton's success with moderate principles, including holding back on proposed health care reform, the group claimed success. Exactly how voters will respond to this shift in ambition and objective remains to be seen. It will surely restore faith in liberal base voters. It's definitely a gamble, but it's a role of the dice that Bush and Karl Rove successfully played to desired effect for conservatives in the 2000s. Kevin Sullivan is a senior majoring in English and is the Collegian's Tuesday columnist. His e-mail address is kjs5089@psu.edu.

## blog lines

**THON**

After canning trips, fundraisers and 46 hours of dancing, the final numbers for THON 2010 are in. Exceeding last year's total, THON Public Relations Overall Elyse Adams said the continued support of the many different organizations involved is what keeps it going up.

Read more from the THON blog and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at [psu.collegian.com/blogs](http://psu.collegian.com/blogs).

**Washington's Post**

There's no doubt about the type of legacy Tyra Grant leaves on Lady Lion basketball. Grant spoke earlier in the season about her desire to play professionally, either in the WNBA or in Europe, but she also likes to talk her ideas over with one of her high school friends as well. And why not? This person knows a thing or two about trying to take his game to the professional level, and that's why Grant and former Penn State quarterback Daryll Clark rely on each other's friendship while their careers try and straighten themselves out.

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