

THE CALIFORNIA AGGIE EDITORIALS

ASUCD SENATE

Senate should penalize Roberts

The role of an ASUCD senator is to monitor student activities and services, oversee the budget, initiate new projects and — at the very least — attend weekly Senate meetings and hold office hours.

Unless, of course, your name is Chad Roberts.

Roberts hasn't shown up to a Senate meeting since Oct. 23, and has attended just four of the seven meetings this quarter. He also hasn't authored any legislation, and his only real suggestion — to create a Legislative Analysts' Office to research and discuss Senate resolutions and bills prior to voting — was ill-advised.

In fact, the extent of his legislative career in the senate has been co-authorship of one senate bill. Over Roberts' entire term, he has missed eight of 20 Senate meetings and been late to or left early from two more.

In short, Roberts is failing in his duties and isn't even capable of consistently showing up to meetings. When he did attend, the usefulness of his contributions was dubious at best.

The fact that the Senate won't

take any action on the issue is just as troubling.

The Senate decided on Nov. 13 that Roberts' behavior was inappropriate, but it won't discipline him as his term is almost up.

Instead, it will take a course of inaction, continuing to pay him \$49 per week to do nothing. The Senate should not only terminate his pay, but also demand the return of the wasted funds it spent on Roberts.

The Senate has authored legislation regarding holding certain amounts of office hours. It should do the same with Senate meeting attendance, and monetary consequences should be the penalty.

Roberts graduated from UC Davis in the spring, which may have something to do his lack of interest in the position.

Recent Senator-elect Danny Garrett is a similar situation in that he, too, could graduate prior to the completion of his term.

Garrett said he wouldn't graduate before his term is up, and the Senate should hold him to that — unless it wants another absentee Senator.

BIKE CHURCH CLOSURE

Greater cooperation needed

The Davis Bike Church could not find salvation, as university administrators elected to evict the bicycle co-op from the Domes sustainable living area last month.

The university told the Bike Church this summer that it must get its facilities up to code before facing an Oct. 1 inspection. Despite rousing efforts by Bike Church ministers and members of the community to do just that, the Department of Student Housing decided to forgo their assessment of the facility after learning the church did not meet the campus fire code.

Although it is understandable that Student Housing wants to minimize its liabilities, not working toward a common solution with the Bike Church is inexcusable. The Bike Church was a much-loved UC Davis institution, adding to the university's unique character.

It is ironic that a university that takes pride in being sustainable summarily removed an environmentally friendly asset from our campus. Offering bicycle education workshops and used bike parts to the community, the church was a prime example of a local effort to increase alternative transportation and sustainable

living.

Instead of forcing the Bike Church off university property, Student Housing should have worked closely with the church to find a solution and give them clear guidelines to improve its structures. Though Student Housing's safety concerns were legitimate, there is no reason that the church's shutdown had to be permanent.

This is not to say the Bike Church was free of blame. Their leadership structure was almost non-existent and the operation was not well organized. Furthermore, the Bike Church did not make an adequate effort to anticipate the potential problems with their organization.

Working together could have ended the matter with both sides pleased: Student Housing would minimize the risk of lawsuits, while the students would keep a cherished campus institution.

Instead of cooperating with each other, however, communication was poor and it seemed as though both sides were working against each other.

Although the Bike Church is clearly something students want on campus, it was no match for a "higher power" — university administration.

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GUEST OPINIONS

The California Aggie welcomes guest opinions from its readers. Guest opinions must be typed with an approximate word count of 600 to 800, or character count around 3,000 to 4,000. The same standards of letters to the editor apply to guest opinions.

Guest opinions may reflect a variety of viewpoints. Any member of the campus community is eligible and encouraged to highlight issues regarding UC Davis, regional or national issues.

Address letters or guest opinions to the Opinion Editor, The California Aggie, 25 Lower Freeborn, UC Davis, CA 95616. Letters may also be faxed to (530) 752-0355 or sent via e-mail to opinion@californiaaggie.com

GUEST OPINIONS

LGBT community should unite

By TOBY BEAUCHAMP
LGBT Activist

It's not just homophobia that enabled the recent passage of California's Proposition 8, which eliminates marital rights for same-sex couples. In fact, as thousands of LGBT people and their allies protest Prop 8, it is race and racism that come bubbling to the surface.

Race figured heavily into campaigns both for and against Prop 8. Yes on 8, primarily funded by white conservative organizations from outside California (including massive donations from the Mormon Church and Colorado's Focus on the Family), particularly targeted communities of color. In fact recent news reports reveal that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints began a steady grassroots campaign against same-sex marriage in California in 1997. Ads in multiple languages, featuring people of color opposing same-sex marriage, worked on the assumption that all people of color are both straight and inherently homophobic. Gay rights were made to seem irrelevant and even damaging to these communities, pitting race against sexuality by linking queerness with whiteness.

But the No on 8 campaign also implied that gay rights are white rights, with ads consisting primarily of white, middle-class people. Ads that did include images of people of color — including one that drew connections to earlier laws prohibiting interracial marriage — failed to indicate how marital rights might have material benefits for queer communities struggling against racism, poverty and anti-immigrant pol-

icies. Richard Kim's recent article in The Nation reports that No on 8 neglected to campaign strongly in communities of color or in languages other than English until shortly before the election. Nevertheless, some factions of the white gay movement now blame communities of color — and black voters in particular — for Prop 8's success. White gay journalist Dan Savage wrote last week that black homophobia is one of the biggest problems facing LGBT people of all races, citing exit polls that show 70 percent of black voters supported Prop 8. Savage echoed a common white gay sentiment: since LGBT voters generally supported Obama, black voters should reciprocate by voting against Prop 8. This stance erases the lives and work of queer black people, and assumes that black voters owe the No on 8 campaign some loyalty, even though the campaign focused primarily on white gay lives.

To scapegoat black voters, Savage and others ignore that Prop 8 passed most easily in primarily white counties, and in the same counties that voted for Bush in 2004. In fact, black voters made up only 10 percent of voters statewide. Despite these facts, black queer people protesting Prop 8 in Los Angeles and elsewhere report experiencing violence and racial epithets from white people who blame them for Prop 8's success and for queer oppression more generally.

While we strongly condemn the homophobia that Prop 8 represents and institutionalizes, we believe this is an important moment for the mainstream LGBT movement to reconsider its goals and strategies. Instead of last-minute attempts to win votes from communities of color without actually address-

ing their needs, long-term coalitions must be built that work against broader forms of oppression. Despite the basic similarities between bans against interracial and same-sex marriages, interracial marriage was never a major priority for the black civil rights movement of the 1960s. Most organizers were more concerned with police violence, access to education and housing, and voter rights. What would the current LGBT movement look like if it instead prioritized struggles against poverty, inadequate health care and police brutality? These goals would necessarily address racism, classism and state violence in ways that the current marriage movement does not. For example, the movement ignores how marriage may be experienced as a form of violence (rather than an act of love) by communities of color and poor communities coerced into marriage by U.S. welfare reform and healthcare policies. While sometimes strategically useful, marriage should not be the primary way to access these basic resources and protections. The LGBT movement recently demonstrated the ability to organize on an enormous level, yet remains focused on a goal that benefits only the most normative gay family and relationship structures. In the wake of Prop 8, we hope that queer communities and their allies will think beyond marriage as the primary gateway to liberation.

The article's co-authors include ABIGAIL BOGGS, CYNTHIA DEGNAN, BENJAMIN D'HARLINGUE, CATHY HANNABACH, TRISTAN JOSEPHSON, LIZ MONTEGARY, JUDY SANCHEZ, KARA THOMPSON and MARK YANEZ. The authors are undergraduate and graduate students at UC Davis, engaged in queer and trans activist and academic work.

Black Vote in Obama Victory based on politics, not racial status

By CARL JORGENSEN
Professor Emeritus, UC Davis

Black support of Obama was a deciding factor in Obama's win, but this support was due to Black's commitment to the Democratic Party, not to racial solidarity.

In this election Obama took about 530 out of every 1,000 votes and McCain 460, an Obama victory margin of 70 votes per 1,000 voters.

According to CNN exit polls, Blacks were 13 percent of the electorate and voted for Obama 95 percent of the time. Thus there were 130 Black voters for every 1,000 voters. Of these 123 (130*.95) voted for Obama and 7 for McCain, a plus 116 per 1000 margin for Obama. This is 46 votes per 1,000 higher than Obama's victory margin. Blacks provided the margin of victory for Obama. Non Blacks on average favored McCain.



James Noonan

Steal this column

Unprecedented

Over the past two weeks, the American media has spent countless hours discussing the unprecedented election of Barack Obama. While Obama's status as the first African American to be elected to the office of president will certainly solidify his place in American history, his victory also signifies a drastic change in the political attitude of the American people.

Over the past eight years, the American public has become so disenfranchised by the political policies of the Bush administration that they are willing to — for the first time in history — sacrifice the principles of self reliance and individualism that our country was founded upon. The aim of this shift, as Obama once described, is to help the United States "break free from the essential constraints that were placed by the founding fathers in the Constitution" — specifically, the Bill of Rights.

Since its inception in 1791, the Bill of Rights has served as the guideline for equitable interactions between the American people and their gov-

ernment. The 10 amendments that make up the Bill of Rights aim to limit the powers of Washington, effectively guaranteeing that the individual liberties of citizens cannot be infringed upon by their elected officials.

In a 2001 radio interview, Obama aptly described these first 10 amendments as a collection of "negative rights," meaning that they outlined exactly what the government *couldn't* do to its people. In Obama's opinion, the essential flaw within the Bill of Rights is that it does include the addition of "positive rights," or what the government *must* do for its people.

Obama plans to introduce this notion of "positive rights" by guaranteeing certain services to each and every citizen. (i.e. universal healthcare) However, just as "negative rights" ensure personal liberties by means of limiting the powers of government, "positive rights" drastically reduce the role of the individual by increasing the government's presence in society.

For example, if the government is given the responsibility of providing affordable healthcare for all of its citizens, it must somehow find a way to provide services to those who cannot afford them. Essentially, the government will be given the "positive right" to take funds from those citizens who *have*, and direct them towards those who *need*. Those citizens who do not require government provided healthcare are ultimately left with the short end of the bargain, and are forced to direct their

Americans, Blacks were greatly angered by Bush's failure to assist poor Blacks and Whites marooned by Hurricane Katrina. Further, Bush's economic policies favored the rich. His civil rights enforcement policies ignored Black interests. He fired Justice Department attorneys who would not pursue frivolous "illegal voting" cases.

McCain did not fight against any of these policies at the time they were implemented. If Biden, Hillary Clinton, or some other Democrat sympathetic to Black interests had run for president, Black votes for that person would undoubtedly have been higher than their votes for Kerry in 2004. However happy Black voters were to see a competent liberal Black man running for president, their overwhelming support for him were primarily due to policy issues, not racial identification.

It is this idea of forced charity — which stands in blatant disregard to the principle of self-reliance — that characterizes the drastic shift away from the ideals upon which our nation was founded. It is as if we, as a country, have grown tired of personal freedom, and are looking for new ways to surrender control over our lives to another.

It is this shift that will mark the beginning of America's gradual descent into an Orwellian dystopia, and not just in terms of monetary redistribution. It is no coincidence that, only a week after Obama's election, key Democratic officials such as Nancy

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Pelosi began running their mouths about ludicrous ideas such as reinstating the Fairness Doctrine — an FCC policy that required any media outlet who displayed a political slant to al-

low equal time for opposition comment, and was quite possible the closest thing America has ever had to a "thought police."

It appears that, after Nov. 4, it has come time for Americans to wave goodbye to free speech, goodbye to free thought, and goodbye to the notion that man is capable of governing himself — all in an effort to make way for the unprecedented change provided by Mr. Barack Obama.

JAMES NOONAN swears he will never live his life for the sake of another man, nor ask any man to live for his. All hate mail, which undoubtedly will follow any attack on Obama, can be sent to jnoonan@ucdavis.edu.

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