

Attacks on welfare may spell cutbacks

Some truth is contained within President Reagan's recent attacks on the welfare system. The welfare system does create dependency, it does encourage families to separate, and requiring recipients to work for benefits could produce positive effects. However, whether or not his proposals will actually benefit welfare recipients and the nation at large depend on the motives driving Reagan's welfare-revision campaign.

If Reagan achieved his aim of simultaneously supporting military growth, avoiding a tax hike and eliminating the federal deficit, domestic programs would have to be drastically cut. Bombasting the welfare program as "anti-family" may be a Reagan ploy to inch toward massive cuts in the system. Cuts included in his budget proposal may foreshadow future plans to dismantle the welfare system.

Reagan called for review and overhaul of the welfare system during his annual State of the Union Message to Congress Feb. 4. He held the welfare system responsible for breaking up families and creating a "spider's web of dependency."

And in his budget proposal submitted the following day, Reagan asked Congress to require employable adults to search for employment in order to receive welfare benefits. Saturday, Reagan said, "Obviously something is desperately wrong with our welfare system." Referring to welfare programs, he said, "We're in danger of creating a permanent culture of poverty."

Some of Reagan's contentions are true. The welfare system does tend to propagate dependence on the system. The longer individuals rely solely on welfare for income, the longer they are removed from the job market and the longer they must continue to rely on the system.

In addition, education opportunities for the children of welfare recipients are severely limited. Often the cycle repeats itself from generation to generation.

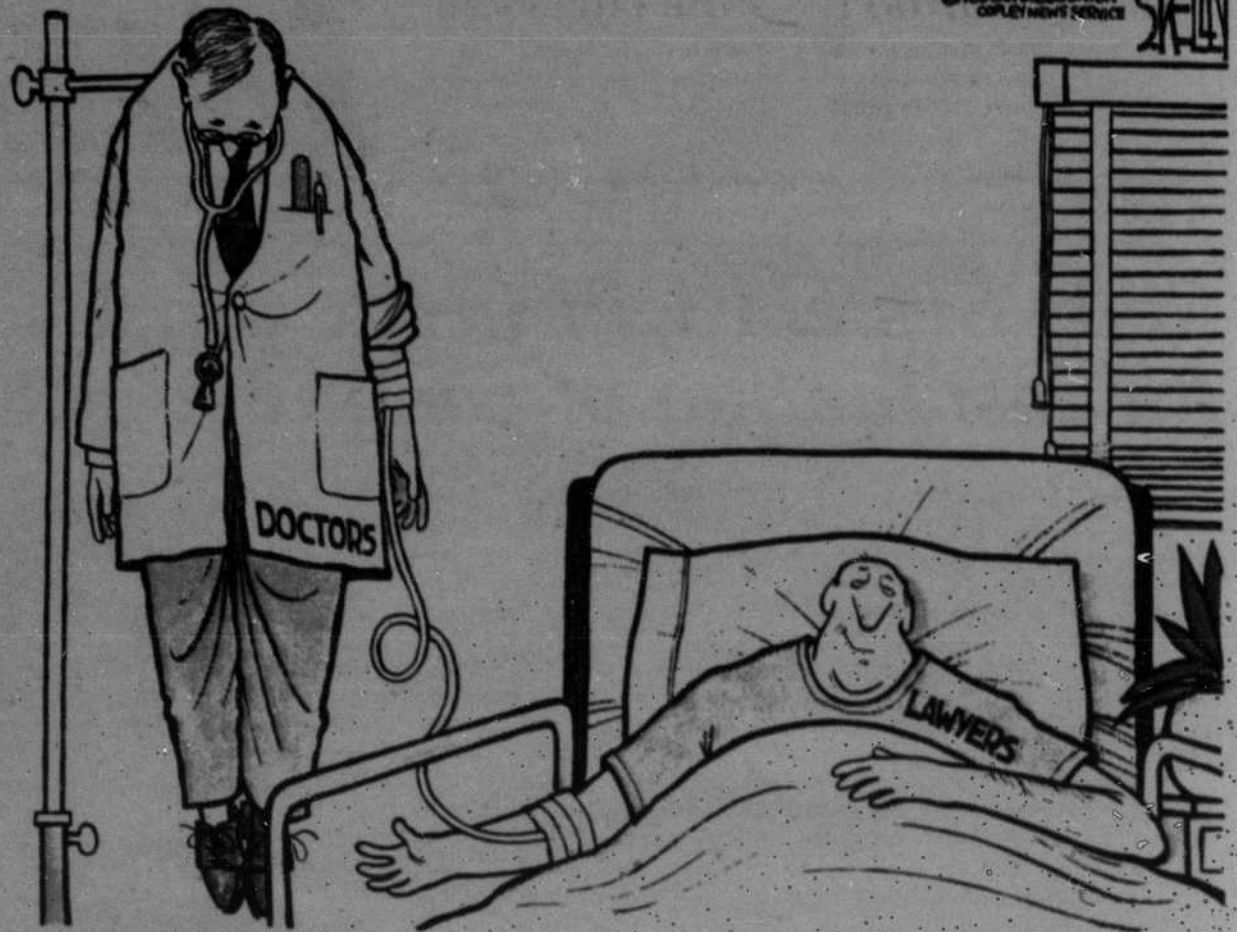
And requiring welfare recipients to work for their benefits, providing the system is implemented properly, can produce beneficial outcomes. Workfare programs, in which able adults are required to accept training or employment in exchange for welfare aid, exist in more than 20 states.

If single parents with preschool-age children are exempt from the work requirement and adequate child care is provided for other single parents, the programs can provide participants with education and job skills and enable them to wean from welfare reliance. Jobs can also provide participants with a sense of usefulness and self-esteem.

But even as Reagan called for efforts to employ welfare recipients, his budget proposal included provisions to eliminate by the end of the year a program that provides employment counseling and job-location assistance to welfare recipients.

Reagan is also correct in asserting the current welfare system encourages families to break up. Single-parent families are eligible for more welfare aid in most states than two-parent families, thus many families separate as a means to survive. But while Reagan has commented at length on this problem, it is unclear how he proposes to solve it.

The key to a solution is providing enough welfare benefits to two-parent families to dissuade them from breaking up. But Reagan may simply be using a legitimate complaint to cast a negative shadow on the program in order to create an atmosphere conducive to program cutbacks.



Commentary

ROTC is an outside group and should be banned from campus

First let me thank the editors of the Emerald for bringing up the question of freedom of speech and action in connection with the effort to have Military Science deleted from our curriculum (ODE, Feb. 11). These are important, widely held concerns about which there is much misunderstanding and some deliberate obfuscation.

There are many preprofessional areas not represented in our curriculum, such as engineering, training for the ministry, modern farming and others. One university can't do everything.

Is it the Emerald's position that persons interested in these fields, and organizations promoting them, are being unfairly excluded and prevented from presenting their views on campus, and that our students are thereby deprived of some of their rights?

If we could induce them to do it, should we invite the Catholic Church to set up, fund, staff and manage a training program for

the priesthood, not under the control of the University? Should General Motors Corp. be invited to run our business college in such a manner? Or should the CIA be invited to set up, staff and run a program in spying and covert activities — in the name of free speech and freedom of choice for our students? How about Accuracy in Academia?

There is an immense difference between encouraging freedom of speech and the presentation of all views on campus, and actively supporting training programs designed, funded and managed by intrusive outside organizations with little understanding or concern for what makes a good university. This is especially true in the case of highly controversial organizations such as the military or the Moral Majority.

It is particularly true in the case of the military since all of us are forced to help fund their programs through our taxes, regardless of what we may think of them. The University does not select the instructors, control the curriculum, and of course, we have no control over what the cadets may later be ordered to do at our expense and in our name — as they did in Indochina and may soon be doing in Central America.

The instructors do not have to meet usual faculty expectations either before or after appointment, are beholden to an outside organization rather than to the University and yet are accorded academic rank and voting privileges.

In 1979, Thomas W. Carr, then director of defense education for the Department of Defense, outlined in considerable detail the Pentagon's plan for taking over higher education in the United States

and changing its character. He predicted that "the military will have become a major instrument for youth socialization, assuming a large portion of the role once dominated by family, church, school and civilian work setting."

He also stated that "the military stresses obedience, established procedures and hierarchy — and has little interest in a more abstract search for purer knowledge. Education and the armed forces have come a long way together and the future looks bright."

We now see his predictions becoming reality with frightening rapidity, with the drying up of legitimate funding sources for University programs and student assistance, the burgeoning military programs, Defense Department grants, ROTC scholarships and the illegal use of student financial records by draft registration officials.

It is not my motion, but the military which denies freedom of speech here. If ROTC officers make public statements opposing Pentagon or administration policies, no matter how idiotic the policy, they would be promptly fired or removed from their position. Even their advanced students must take a "loyalty" oath, interpreted by their superiors as an oath of obedience.

It is not an appropriate activity for the University to actively promote militarization of our country. Doing so does not promote free speech or freedom of choice.

By Bayard H. McConaughy

Bayard McConaughy is a University biology professor who recently made a motion to the University Senate to ban ROTC from campus.

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