

# Editorial

## Overriding the veto won't make for 'pork'

The Senate did not cripple the Reagan presidency last Thursday by overriding his highway bill veto. He has done a good enough job at that by himself with the Iran-Contra affair. However, the drama that went on before the legislative rebuke and the political implications of this congressional snub deserve some comment. Furthermore, the bill had too many merits for it to be vetoed.

This was the eighth time a Reagan veto has been overturned. Although this fact is not remarkable in and of itself — the president successfully has vetoed 61 bills during his six-year tenure — the timing of it is. This override follows closely on the heels of the Water Quality Act of 1987, an act the president vetoed, but was passed nonetheless in late January.

What can be interpreted from these overrides is the collective resolve demonstrated by Senate Democrats, who have held a slight majority since November. During the Reagan years, overrides of presidential vetoes have been few and far between. The charismatic leader has had an impressive success rate lobbying Congress. Reagan has managed to clear funding for many political hot potatoes such as his Star Wars project, further outlays for a burgeoning defense budget and aid for the Nicaraguan Contras.

As some federal lawmakers have pointed out, this latest override probably would not have occurred a year ago. What we may be witnessing is a congressional shift in priorities — a shifting away from increased defense spending and a movement toward social and domestic appropriations.

More specifically, Reagan's fight to veto the highway bill illustrated his effort to move away from the lingering effects of the Iran-Contra scandal and the whispered talk of him being a lame duck. The president conferred privately with 13 dissenting Republican senators in a move to persuade them to vote for his veto. He failed to sway a single one. And in an act that can only be defined as desperate, he told the lawmakers, "I beg you for this vote."

The veto was denied by a vote of 67 to 33, precisely the two-thirds majority needed for the override.

Moreover, the president's decision to fight the highway bill was politically imprudent. The bill passed the House by a vote of 407 to 17 and the Senate by a vote of 79 to 17. The odds were stacked more against Reagan this time than in the previous legislative battle over the Water Quality Act.

The reason for this bill's popularity lies with the economic benefits states will reap. Hundreds of thousands of jobs will be created by this law. Rapid and mass transit systems will be constructed. Roads, bridges and tunnels will be fixed. In addition to all this, 65 mph zones will be designated on rural portions of our nation's highways, or about 75 percent of the entire system.

Lane County is to receive roughly \$8 million for road improvements thanks to the veto override, and nearly \$2 million will be allotted for improving the Ferry Street Bridge. Reagan used this as an example of what he called pork barrel legislation.

But pork is all in the eye of the beholder. Looking at his Star Wars project, his unabashed zeal for defense spending, and his equally zealous support of the Contras, we see pork. The jobs and the domestic improvements the highway law will bring are simply good legislation. To label this law as too much pork is so much bull.



## Letters

### Wider concept

That abortion is a legal procedure in the United States is only symptomatic of a larger problem. I am troubled by what I perceive to be a shift in ethical standards from a "sanctity of life" to a "quality of life" position.

Science has come to a consensus. Irrefutably, human life begins at conception. Most religious doctrines concur. Nevertheless, the abortion debate lingers in the sociological arena.

We continue to terminate the lives of innocents based upon what we consider cost/benefit factors, meaningfulness, convenience: the so-called "quality of life." In the face of hard science, we've bought the hard sell.

We are playing with fire when we embrace this new ethical conduct. While abortion was considered an unthinkable only several decades ago, it is now commonplace.

Which unthinkable will we espouse in the decades to come? In order to preserve our right to life as we have known it in America, we must readopt our traditional ethical standard which would deny that there is a thing as a life not worthy to be lived.

Robbin Stewart  
Springfield

### Poor taste

Dan Goulet's letter (April 1) was without doubt one of the most tasteless and moronic things ever to appear in the Emerald.

His letters are usually pseudo-intellectual ultra-conservative ravings, but normally they serve some small purpose — even if only to show that everyone is allowed to publicly express their political and social opinions.

In his last letter, Dan wasn't expressing political views, nor was he making social commentary. He used the letters page as a medium for expressing his sick sense of "humor" and his prejudice toward homosexuals.

This prejudice is evidenced in his stereotype of homosexuals as careless and promiscuous. I'm not sure why Goulet views homosexuals in this manner, maybe it is some sort of psychological projection... At any rate, his narrow-minded and unhumorous attack on homosexuals has no place in the letters section of the ODE.

Max Bell  
Philosophy

### Idea to adopt

I never met her, but maybe someday I will. I will tell you with all the emotion I have that I love her.

She was a Catholic woman in her early 20s, going to school in California's Palo Alto-Stanford area. She was (is... I hope) an artist and a music lover, young and in love with life.

She found a boyfriend. She became pregnant. And I was born on June 7, 1963. My biological mother lovingly gave me up for adoption.

Now I'm 23, I'm here, I'm alive, I laugh, cry, hope and love. I have friends, family and loved ones, and I have a future.

Most important of all, I was given the chance to live. My life, my personhood, is just as human now as it was when I

was only 23 weeks old inside the womb.

Could it be that, except when the mother's life is in danger, adoption is the most compassionate alternative to an unplanned pregnancy?

My brother and sister and I believe so. All three of us were adopted. Think about it.

David P. Bartlett  
Springfield

### Mental state

"Yoo-hoo," is nothing sacred anymore? Is the level of gullibility within people so high that we have people who pay money to learn "channeling," a so-called mental state of "higher awareness" that allows a person to experience any state of mind that comes to mind?

After reading in the April 1 Emerald "Channeling provides many with access to higher spiritual realm, experts say," I thought, at first, the story was mistakenly put in as an April Fool's joke. The fact is, though, that some people are willing to believe just about anything.

The feature reminded me of the ancient alchemists who believed they could mix metals to make gold. The study of alchemy did lead to the science of chemistry and so contributed to the betterment of life, but not without first traveling down many false roads.

As a person who believes strongly in the existence of spiritual output from all living things, I feel that an egotistical style of increasing spiritual awareness of living beings is self-defeating. Like matter and anti-matter, egotism and spirituality cancel each other out.

One need not spend money on books or classes to increase awareness of one's spiritual inner being. All that is needed is a realistic attitude about one's life and how much of a privilege it is to have a consciousness that can experience the sharing of love and life.

Patrick Clancy  
Eugene

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