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NEWSPAPER**

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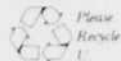
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A policy that's Wilder than ever

By KRISANNE COMBS
University Journal, U. of Virginia

It seems the thing to do these days is to try and cover up the fact that you voted for Doug Wilder. My personal tactic is to remind people that I didn't vote at all. (Never mind that I probably would have voted for Wilder at the time.) Hindsight is always 20/20. And it's becoming clearer every day. As clear as a random urine sample, as it were.

One of Wilder's latest follies is to bring up the idea of drug testing for college students. In light of the March drug raids at the U. of Virginia, Wilder threw out a blatantly political statement clearly aimed at showing the rest of the nation that Democrats — and in particular — Doug Wilder — can be as tough on drugs as the Bush administration. (This is, of course, the same Bush administration that has dismissed Clarence Thomas's marijuana use as "youthful indiscretion.")

It is yet another in Wilder's string of blunders that has Virginians laughing and pundits screaming. Never mind that he can't balance the state's budget, keep track of his personal life or get his governmental priorities straight. Dearest Doug blithely strolls through the presidential primary game even though no one in his own state can take him seriously.

Drug testing is an idea that no respectable university administrator should take seriously either. Neither should student leaders. But a U. of Virginia former student council president told *The Washington Post*, "I'm sure that the governor's proposal would meet a lot of opposition from a lot of students." He goes on to say, "But then again, if you're not guilty, you don't have anything to hide." Obviously words spoken by a man who doesn't even begin to comprehend the principle of invasion of privacy without due cause.

Wilder told a recently appointed Virginia task force on drugs and crime at state universities that drug testing was a perfectly acceptable solution to the drug problem as long as it does not "run afoul of constitutional guarantees." Seems like Wilder just made my point for me. I guess as long as there's a legitimate political motive, the Constitution can be thrown out of the window.

Wilder reminded us that when he attended Virginia Union U. and Howard U. in the 1950s, control of students' lives was "quite tight." Since then, he said,



KEVIN THOMASON, UNIVERSITY JOURNAL, U. OF VIRGINIA

universities have taken a "laissez-faire" attitude toward the actions of students.

Until the passage of the 26th Amendment in 1973, colleges had more of a need and a responsibility to act "in loco parentis" since the large proportion of students were still minors.

But these days, the overwhelming majority of college students are over 18.

Wilder needs to remember that a university is a community like any other community of 18,000.

It is made up almost entirely of adults who, last time I checked, are free to make their own choices concerning just about everything, including whether or not to engage in illegal activities. And if they get arrested, then that's their business, not the governor's.

Certainly the administration is concerned about the quality of life at the university, as it should be.

But let's not take it too far. Imagine the uproar if Washington, D.C., Mayor Sharon Pratt Dixon decided to institute drug testing over the entire community because drug dealers were arrested in various parts of town. She wouldn't get away with it, and neither should Doug Wilder.

Once students get to college, chances are they will be an adults before too long. If they choose to use illegal drugs, that is their own problem, not the university's or the state's. Certainly parents are worried that the peer pressure will be so great that their children will succumb to the temptation as they never have before.

But I would argue that if students want to use drugs, they will find them, be it on the street corner in D.C., in a fraternity house or stashed under a mattress in a dorm room.

And there's little, if anything, Doug Wilder can do about it, except use the issue to catapult himself to the White House.

U. VIEWS

1-800-662-5511

College campuses have become a new focus for the war on drugs. In light of growing drug-related arrests at universities across the country, many people believe students should be held more accountable for their actions. Give us a call, and tell us what you think:

Should college students be subjected to random drug testing to remain in good academic standing?

Call our toll-free number today to share your views.



Doug Wilder: A new campus crusader?