

Reduce programs but cut rationally

As promised during political campaigns last fall, it's budget cutting time in Washington.

Republicans in Congress are exploring a number of ways to reduce spending. Among ideas mentioned by some in Washington is privatizing, cutting or eliminating a number of government agencies and departments. From billion dollar agencies to million dollar programs, many items are being eyed for the chopping block.

Some of the departments mentioned for cuts are the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Education, Commerce and Energy. The United States Geological Survey is also being targeted for elimination or reduction.

It is true that in order to reduce spending both large and small programs and agencies must be cut. Both cabinet agencies and relatively small programs, such as public broadcasting, are being reviewed for cutbacks. Whether one disagrees with the particular cuts or not, it seems that Republicans as a whole seem genuine in trying to make spending reductions based on what they see as waste.

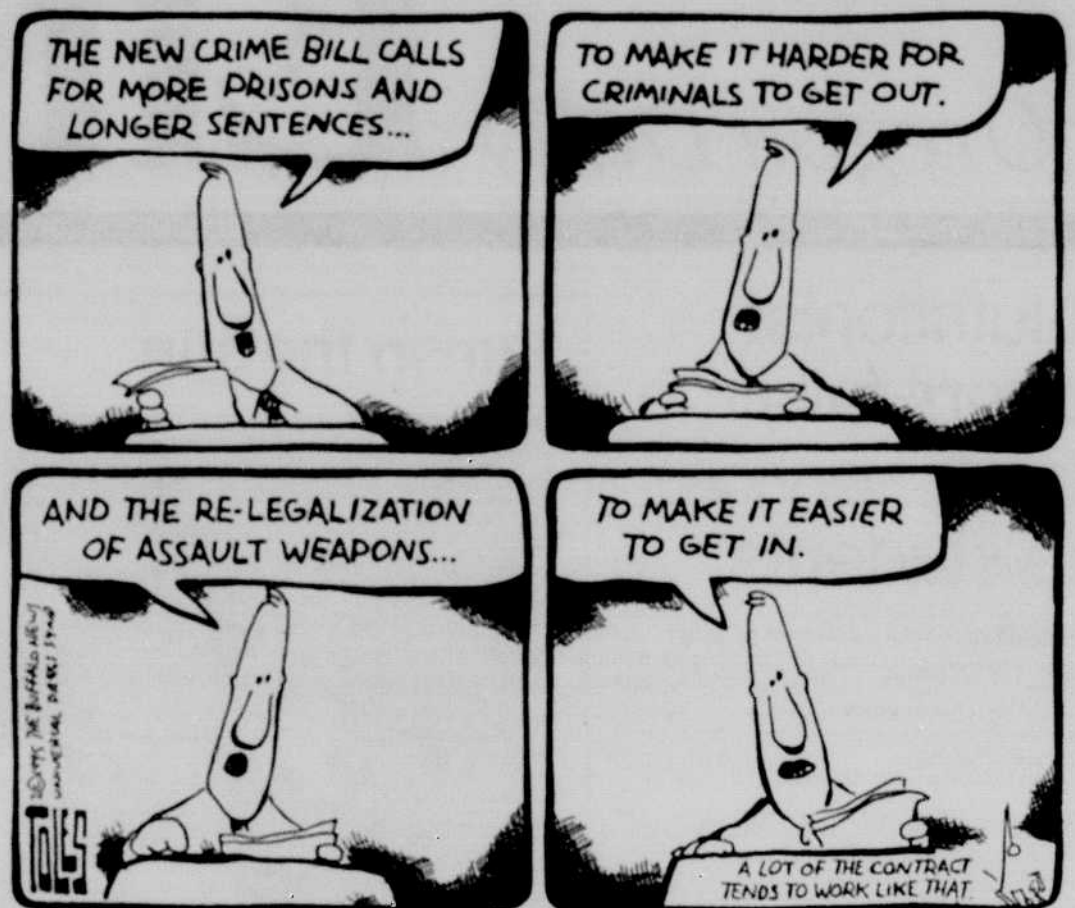
The current proposals on the table are just that — proposals. They have not been approved or, in many cases, officially introduced in Congress. They are merely a smattering of cuts that can be made to save money. With that in mind, a number of good suggestions for cuts have been made that can be followed on within upcoming months.

Regardless, there could be problems with some of the proposed cuts. For example, with the proposed cutbacks at the Department of Energy, at least one Republican member of Congress is talking about relaxing policies on nuclear waste, aiming more toward "containment" of contamination at areas such as the Hanford nuclear reservation, instead of total cleanup.

It is probable that elimination or cuts to an agency would reduce its effectiveness in legislating; one would hope that it would not come with the consequence of a reduction in regulations for a particular industry. Cuts must be made based on actual waste, not because one feels that a particular policy is wrong.

While the idea of cutting departments is good, it seems questionable that a middle-class tax cut is still being proposed. It seems like the money, which is just not there to make the cut possible, is being used to bribe the middle class. Rather than cut on one hand and pay the middle class with the other, it makes more sense to use the money to reduce the deficit.

Americans elected a Republican Congress to, among other things, cut federal spending. Congress should continue to explore ways to cut wasteful expenses reasonably and rationally. However, Congress must also consider the consequences of any cuts or changes that it makes.



LETTERS

Misinformed

In response to the charmingly disturbing abortion-related commentary in the *Emerald*, Feb. 7, for goodness sake, gentlemen! How can you not realize what an editorial like yours means underneath the thinly veiled double-talk and inflammatory premises? How dare you assert that these abortion murderers are somehow excused from responsibility because they whine that they are being excluded from coverage by the national news media?

This is the same kind of disgusting escapist malaise that is sweeping our country today. "The serial rapist did it because he had an absent father complex." "The mass murderer came from a dysfunctional family," etc. We cannot allow these horribly dangerous attitudes to continue.

If there is one thing we as a society are perfecting lately, it's our ability to run away from placing the blame where it belongs: on the individual who perpetuates these unlawful activities. If we want to focus on preventing the activities that "drive" people to do these crimes, fine. Do not, however, simply sit back and write off someone's violent actions as "just one of those things." By maintaining this attitude, we are doing more harm to our society than a million doctor-killers every could.

Just a side note here, but I was especially concerned over your assertion that "pro-choice" is a kind of jargon masking a deeper "pro-abortion" movement. I instantly lost any amount of respect I held for y'all, as writers and an opposing side, when you brought up this completely false assertion. Pro-choice does not imply pro-abortion.

I am completely morally opposed to the practice of abortion. I do, however, adhere to the idea that I have no control whatsoever over what a woman wishes to do with her body. A person who is pro-choice believes in a woman's right to choose what is right for her own body. Pro-abortion, however, implies that you sanction the

practice of abortion to the point of wishing to extend its political influence.

You are misinformed and guilty of one of the most heinous literary clichés ever devised: compromising the truth to suck out the last drops of controversy from the universal juice box that is American political discourse. Shame on you.

Kavi Chaitanya Grace-Luke
Philosophy

Housing scarce

Mr. Fontana has stated in his editorial (*ODE*, Feb. 8) that the issue of Amazon Family Housing is not one of low-cost public housing. Patently, 14 percent is 14 percent and low-cost public housing is an issue. Did Mr. Fontana also forget that living costs, including housing, prevent Oregonians from attending the University? Students from rural Oregon and those with families find it very difficult to find housing which won't bankrupt them in the middle of a term.

Since low-income housing is very scarce in Eugene, students occupy a disproportionate share of that housing throughout the Eugene-Springfield area, down to the trailer spots. In 1994 nationwide, Eugene had the largest increase in housing costs. That same year, homelessness rose 42 percent, according to this month's *The Other Paper*. Are low-income students expected to pay fair market value for \$524 per month? That's fair only if year-to-year rent inflation is fair. If the University can be allowed to get into the Student Housing gouge game. Should it be?

Three engineering studies have been conducted for the

Amazon units. They all do not, I am told, agree and at least one did not even tour the site. The Eugene Fire Department hasn't, as far as I know, expressed safety concerns and neither has the EWEB utility. True, these buildings were not intended to be used even as long as they have. They lack foundations and they need a new sewer. The University's lack of care over the years has been fully documented. On the other hand, these are light buildings designed to be dismantled and moved, making rehabilitation cheap.

The buildings have been declared eligible for the historic register, and this puts them in a specific category in the demolition process. Laws made to prevent the loss of historical properties have been followed. The University hasn't followed those laws, and as long as the property hasn't been condemned, the Save Amazon Coalition is simply demanding due process.

Finally, planning for the new housing has yet to result in any document detailing what the \$400 per month figure reflects. Those who will have to pay that amount want to know whether that figure will serve to pay the University's financing, staffing and maintenance costs or whether rent increases after the second year will skyrocket. With the figures available now, it won't and increases will occur.

Apart from the issues of low-income rental scarcity and demolition of historical properties, there is a responsibility on the part of the University to provide realistic and public plans for future housing for its students at the Amazon site.

Vincent Reynolds
History

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