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In my opinion

No taxation without aggravation



GABE BRADLEY
THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Ah, tax season. This is the time of year when most Americans find themselves face to face with the sheer heavy-handed ineptitude of federal bureaucracy. I'm certainly a big believer in rendering unto Caesar, but we happen to live in a society in which we're allowed to disagree with Caesar. So, if it please you, I have the following grumblings when it comes to taxes.

Higher taxes mean just one thing: a bigger, more wasteful government. Though many conservatives talk about small government as if Ronald Reagan invented the idea, the majority of Americans have always, for the most part, supported smaller government and lower taxes. I know the bills need to be paid, but I have philosophical reservations about imposing a tax on somebody's very livelihood in order to support big government.

The federal government used a temporary income tax to pay for the Civil War. The income tax as we know it today wasn't implemented until the Wilson administration. Until that time, the federal government paid its bills primarily with tariff revenue. With the rise of globalization and the attendant decrease in tariffs, together with the increasingly gluttonous appetite of government in a post-Teddy Roosevelt America, a tax on productive labor sounded like a good idea to somebody.

So to those who oppose globalization, may I suggest you also oppose the income tax, and maybe you'll pick up a few more supporters. It's a reactionary idea, perhaps, but protectionism itself is kind of reactionary, so there you have it.

And I just can't stand all the H&R Block commercials this time of year. H&R Block is the second biggest sucker's bet in the tax business.

If your tax situation is complicated enough that you can't just fill in the forms by following the instruction manual, then you probably need a real accountant. If you don't need a real accountant, then there's absolutely no reason to pay someone else to basically do the work of a well-trained chimpanzee by filling in the forms exactly the way the instruction manual says.

But that's not where H&R Block makes its real money. It make its real money from advance refund checks, which is the first biggest sucker's bet in the tax business.

Speaking of refunds, sometimes I think I'm the only person left alive who isn't happy to receive a big refund. People jump up and down in excitement about their refunds. It's your money! You earned it a while ago, but you're just receiving it now.

Nobody's giving you money. They're just giving your money back, with no interest. The bigger your refund, the more of your own hard-earned money has been sitting in the not-so-capable hands of the government being ravaged by inflation

without a penny of interest to show for it. The joke's on you.

On my W-4, I try to get as small a refund as possible. Even more preferable is to have no refund at all. That way, you pay what you owe when you owe it — not a penny more and not a day earlier.

When you do have to calculate your refund, though, notice how on the Form 1040, Line 72a asks you how much of the overpaid amount you'd like refunded to you. Umm ... all of it? Is this a trick question? Is there anyone who really falls for this and decides that this year they feel like paying a little extra tax? Surely they don't really think we're that stupid. Do they?

For all my grumbling, I don't agree with those who advocate non-payment of income tax as a form of protest or civil disobedience. I definitely do not agree with everything for which the government uses my money, and governmental waste infuriates me to no end. Nevertheless, whether I like it or not, I'm paying no more and no less than what our elected representatives have decided upon, which has not always been the case for citizens of the American nation.

I may not like the tax; I may vigorously disagree with the tax and use my freedom of speech to express this view; but, come tax season, I pay up just like everybody else. We do, after all, have taxation with representation. For my money, though, I'd like to see a little less taxation and a little more representation. But maybe that's just me.

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INBOX

Students need to examine science behind transgender

On Feb. 16, the Emerald published a news article, a column, and an editorial, all focusing on transgender identity. Each piece portrayed transgender people as victims of bigotry. In the editorial, advocating legal protection for transgender people, The Emerald wrote: "We must educate ourselves about this issue."

I agree wholeheartedly.

A full understanding of this issue can only be gained by exposure to diverse viewpoints, like that of Paul McHugh, Director of Psychiatry at John Hopkins Medical School. McHugh states that, "We in the Johns Hopkins Psychiatry Department eventually concluded that human sexual identity is mostly built into our constitution by the genes we inherit and the embryogenesis we undergo" (First Things, November 2004). He views transsexuality as a serious medical condition, writing that "We have to learn how to manage this condition as a mental disorder" (The American Scholar, Autumn 1992). A mental disorder? Such a statement would be denounced as hate speech on this cam-

pus. But McHugh's claims do not arise from hate, they arise from science.

If the Emerald wants to educate the campus on transgender identity, it will need to discuss the issue in depth. And if that offends transgender people on this campus, so be it. The role of a university is not to tolerate all ideas and lifestyles. Rather, the proper role of a university is to examine all ideas, celebrating the good and discarding the bad. Debunking the myth that transsexuality is natural would be a good place to start.

Joe Bailey, Freshman

Columnist sympathizes with the wrong gender

In AnneMarie Knepper's commentary, "Perpetuating the Stereotype" (ODE April 7), Knepper expresses her sympathy for the images portrayed of the "middle-class white guy" within the media. According to Knepper, these men "get no respect" with the common portrayals of them being "all fat, stupid, lazy and helpless."

Is the white middle-class guy worthy of respect? The stereotypes of women portrayed in the media, as well as in American society as a whole, demand women to be thin,

sexy yet virginal, subordinate and selfless.

These unrealistic requirements that society and the media demand of women are more destructive than those imposed on middle-class white men.

In conjunction with recent events, Terri Schindler-Schiavo's unfortunate condition and death resulted primarily from brain failure due to bulimia. The media's detrimental portrayals of women prove to be just that.

What is so fatal about the lazy, couch potato white guy? And just who is responsible for these destructive images and stereotypes of women perpetuated in American media and society to begin with?

Julie Higgs, Senior

Congratulations to some of Emerald's ASUO picks

The Emerald endorses its picks for ASUO (ODE April 6). I thought I would never see the day. Way to go Miles Rost for giving articulate enough answers to earn the ODE's endorsement for Senate Seat 1, and way to go College Republicans for getting someone smart enough to challenge the status quo!

Scott Austin, Taiwan ROC

Editorial

Birth control controversy creeps into pharmacies

Recently, the debate over abortion and birth control has checked out of the doctor's office, and is now shifting around impatiently in the lines of pharmacies.

Over the past six months, there have been at least 180 documented situations in which a pharmacist refused to fill a prescription for birth control or similar drugs involving reproduction. These are professional representatives of the medical industry refusing to give women medications that they have been prescribed and, in some cases, even refusing to give patients their prescriptions back so they can go elsewhere to have them filled.

Different states handle the issue in different ways. After a Chicago woman was unable to receive her birth control prescription, Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich put out an April 1 emergency rule stating that pharmacists must fill contraceptive prescriptions, with "No delays. No hassles. No lectures." If the pharmacist absolutely will not fill the prescription, they must immediately find someone else who will.

In an opposite move, the Arizona House of Representatives recently approved something called a conscience clause, meaning that any pharmacist who does not wish to fill a particular prescription because of moral or religious ground is not required to do so. That pharmacist is also not required to refer the prescription-seeker to another pharmacy.

This nationwide situation brings to light a serious problem: the placement of morals, usually religious, within the medical sphere. Doctors in many states are also subject to a different type of conscience clause that allows them to refuse abortion procedures based on moral principles as long as they refer their patients to other abortion doctors. In this case, the conscience clause usually makes sense.

Pharmacists, however, are in a different position. A doctor opposed to abortion would not enter a field of specialization that required the performance of such a procedure; pharmacists do not have this luxury, they distribute all forms of drugs. For a pharmacist to refuse to fill a prescription for birth control, a commonly prescribed drug, would be akin to a physician refusing to see patients with sexually transmitted infections.

It is important to consider the meaning behind Arizona's decision: a pharmacist's belief that sex before marriage is wrong overrides a patient's decision to prevent unwanted pregnancy. A pharmacist's morals may dictate that it is wrong to prevent oneself from ovulating, but the woman's morals probably dictate that it is wrong to have unprotected sex before she is ready to raise a child. To think that the morals of the pharmacist, a third party, could be valued above the morals of a patient under any circumstance is ridiculous.

Regardless of their personal feelings, pharmacists are part of the medical profession, and they have a job to perform. Those who cannot bring objectivity to their jobs should be barred from practice.

Oregon should take a page from the modern Hippocratic Oath — prevention is preferable to cure. The state must require pharmacists to fill patients' prescriptions, regardless of their personal ethics. We need proper conscience clauses here to hold pharmacists to the standards of objectivity we expect in the medical field.

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