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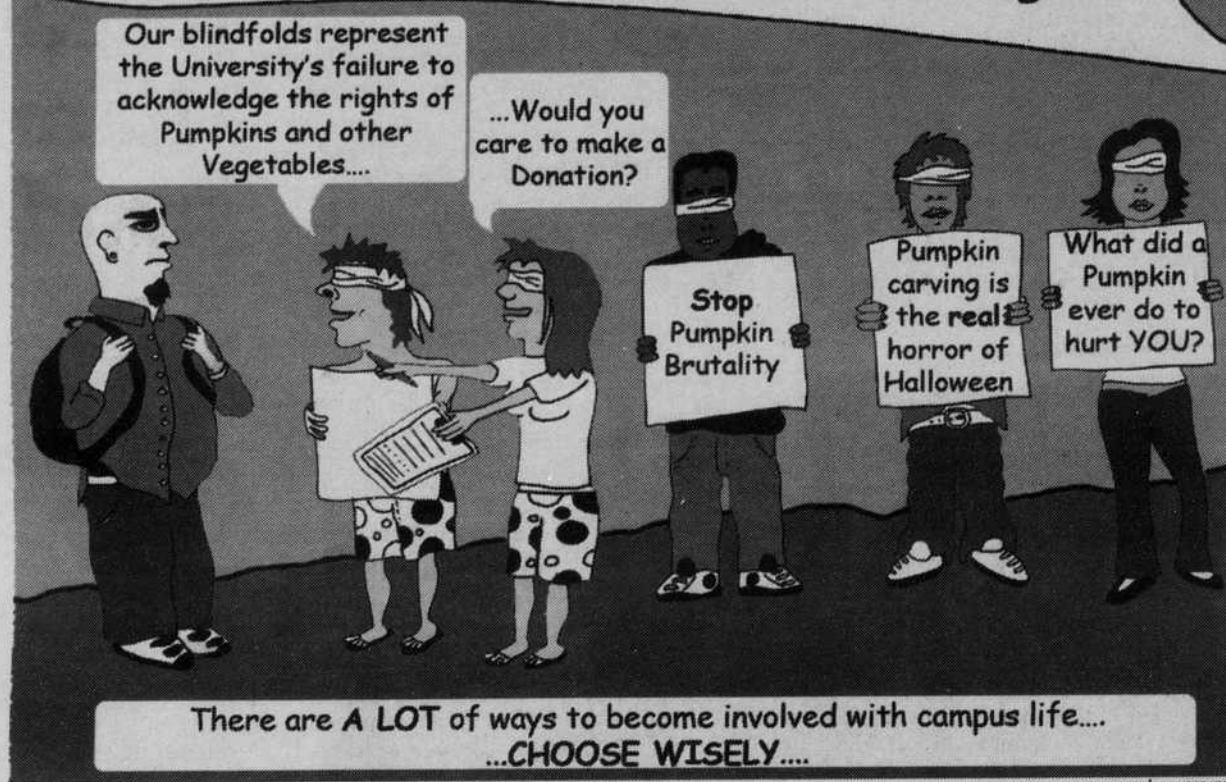
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Student Advocates for Vegetable Rights



AARON DUCHATEAU | ILLUSTRATOR

dysfunctional society

The prosecutor called the situation complete dysfunction — a complete breakdown of the family.

A woman gave birth to a baby girl and within minutes dropped the child three stories onto the debris-ridden ground below. A year later, this same woman had a son. Just minutes after his birth, his mother dropped him the same three stories to follow his sister's fate. But this doesn't even begin to describe the dysfunction of this legal case.

Lucila Ventura, 18 years old, is charged with murder, attempted murder, child endangerment and so on. She could face 40 years in prison.

Lucila's father may face 20 years in prison for the crimes of aggravated sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child. It's no coincidence that both father and daughter have been charged with child endangerment: If Lucila's statement is true, both of her newborn children were the result of Jose Julio Ventura's systematic sexual abuse.

Prosecutor Edward J. De Fazio is correct in his use of the term "dysfunction;" however, further statements from De Fazio indicate that he, as well as the rest of the legal system, is failing to take into account the true ramifications of the case. When De Fazio states that "(Lucila Ventura's mental state) should never lead to these babies being thrown out the window, like they were some piece of garbage," the lawyer turns a blind eye to the personal, as well as societal pressure that led Ms. Ventura to commit such a heinous act. Indeed, the Ventura situation provides a concrete example of how certain national policy — or lack thereof — can have indisputable, and often upsetting, influences upon any U.S. family.

No one in either Lucila's school or family was apparently aware that the girl was twice pregnant; a fact which seriously calls into question Lucila's educational situation. We'll get to the



AILEE SLATER
FURTHER FROM PERFECTION

attendance in schools.

Or U.S. policy-makers could cordially remove their heads from their posteriors and realize that raising good children is the key to the rise of a great nation. If children are required to be in school, then they might as well learn some real life lessons: how to ask for help, how to recognize the extremity of their inner mental state, how to work past a devastatingly problematic family situation.

And, speaking of the family, Lucila's is an anthropological study on its own: Recently immigrated, working low-wage jobs, living in an area of extreme poverty — a class that, like Lucila, continuously slips under the radar. The United States is still far behind the rest of the globe in terms of national, bilingual proficiency, and American egocentrism in regards to the idea of integrating other languages into our society will only serve to isolate families such as the Venturas. Furthermore, as long as ethnocentrism and racism remain the skeleton in the U.S. closet, immigrant families will never be able to assimilate to this country and attain good paying jobs as well as they could.

Most importantly, however, is the way in which Lucila's family situation, and later murder charge, represent the importance of women's health and family planning in creating national policy. It is scary to think how many other Lucilas may emerge should Bush get his wish and discourage schools and health facilities from discussing important options with women, such proper methods to use birth control and when to consider an abortion.

Lucila's case is not an isolated incident. Her decision to murder is as much related to her mental state as it is to her family's and country's mental states. Until the U.S. can get its head in the right place, we all deserve a plea of insanity.

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Editorial

Measure 37 goes against Oregon's constitution

It's about land. And money. But what is Measure 37, really?

Measure 37 dictates that owners of property affected by land-use regulations in Oregon are owed "just compensation" for the loss of profits related to the restrictions on how they use that property. It also allows governing bodies to exempt land from regulations in order to avoid compensating landowners.

Measure 37 applies to land use regulations already in effect. Thus, many claims for compensation are based on hypothetical and often questionable estimates of profit loss.

Although voters approved Measure 37 in last year's election, last week, a Marion County judge found it unconstitutional.

In her ruling, Marion County Circuit Court Judge Mary Mertens James rightly explained that Measure 37 forces the government to make a difficult choice: It must either compensate property owners affected by land restrictions or give up its power to regulate how land is used. Either way, landowners win.

Nearly landowners and other taxpayers, however, often lose.

As demonstrated by plaintiffs' claims in this case, Measure 37 has been applied or may be applied unfairly in some Oregon counties; some property owners have received exemptions from land use laws while others have not. Developing land around a farm, for example, can adversely affect that farm's groundwater quality. Mixing residential housing and farming can also cause tensions with dust, noise, pesticide spraying and traffic congestion.

Oregon voters have recognized these conflicts in the past and worked to remedy them. Oregon began regulating land use in 1973, and the state has become a model for environmentally-minded urban growth boundaries and other planning measures.

Under Measure 37, the desires of landowners have precedent over the desires of a government trying to contend with the multifaceted needs of the environment and city planning policies.

The measure also forces all citizens to help compensate landowners with their tax dollars, even if those citizens do not receive benefits or are negatively affected by Measure 37.

There are some cases in which land restrictions have prevented landowners from using their land in practical and responsible ways. It is certainly unconstitutional that the government's power to rule, i.e. make policies which work toward the greatest good for the greatest number, is compromised by Measure 37.

Moreover, calculating hypothetical lost profits in today's currency is a near-impossible task. Without a mechanism to calculate lost profits, important government policy stands the very real chance of being overturned simply to appease landowners.

Oregon is not required to make amends for laws passed by its government. Sometimes the government enacts policies that are difficult for individuals to cope with, but allocating monetary compensation for lack of a coping mechanism is no way to run a state.

As Governor Ted Kulongoski said Friday, "Significant policy changes that alter the very nature of governmental processes and the rights of individual citizens must be examined and enacted with thoughtful and careful deliberations."

Measure 37 is both unconstitutional and fiscally irresponsible. As this case makes its way to the Oregon Supreme Court, judges should follow James' logic and find this measure as such.

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