

## OUR VIEW

## Bill requiring student insurance falls short

The University provides a variety of services not because they are essential parts of the classroom but because they make it possible for students to focus on their education and enjoy the process a little more.

Public Safety, for example, allows students to get to class safely each day.

The Student Recreation Center provides a place for students, faculty and staff to relieve a little stress and contributes to their well-being.

One of the most important of these services Truman provides, however, is the University Health Center. The health center provides a variety of services, from helping students get over a cold and back in class to offering low-cost reproductive care. These services, which are so needed by students, however, are in danger of being lost.

Rep. Jane Cunningham, R-Chesterfield, has introduced a bill in the Missouri House of Representatives that would privatize university health care across the state (see story, Page 1). The bill would require all students to have insurance so they may be treated at these health centers.

Cunningham said the goal of this bill is to save the taxpayers money. What she fails to see is the cost it would be to universities and students. First, requiring students to have their own insurance would add to the already exorbitant – and continually rising – cost of education. Insurance is not

something that comes cheap. Additionally, the bill disproportionately affects low-income students whose families might not have insurance or whose parents' insurance is very limited. According to 2003 Census data, the 18- to 24-year-old demographic is the most often uninsured, with 30.2 percent not having any type of coverage.

Additionally, some of the services the health center offers at low cost would not necessarily be covered by insurance, such as meningitis vaccines.

Besides basic health care, the health center offers educational programs and employs many students who wish to work in health care in the future. These benefits easily could be lost with the privatization of the health center.

Rep. Cunningham currently is serving as chairwoman of the elementary and secondary education committee. As chairwoman of such a committee, she should be working to help students at all levels, not hindering their progress by denying them sufficient access to health care.

The University often touts the availability of such care to prospective students. It is our duty to ensure this health care remains available for students in the future so they can focus on their education, not wading through insurance problems or worse, not seeking the care they need.

... Requiring students to have their own insurance would add to the already exorbitant – and continually rising – cost of education.

## Truville

Ryan Forristal /cartoonist



## Letters to the Editor

### Column lacked adequate support and a clear definition of feminism

Though we should all applaud Katie Stuart's JINS exploration into the ideas of modern feminism, it seems Ms. Stuart has many of those ideas quite wrong. In light of the fact that she doesn't have "hairy legs," a desire to burn her bra or a disbelief in the "fundamental biological differences between the genders," she reassured us last week that she is not a feminist.

Why isn't she a feminist? Because some of these feminists "want to punish men" and others "don't want scientific studies about gender differences performed and insist that all differences are the product of society." Just who these shadow feminists are or what organizations they may represent is left to our liberally educated imaginations. She concludes that "the feminist movement has gone too far" partly because their thoughts are not "logical" or "rational." With all due respect to Ms. Stuart, where is the logic or rationality in writing an entire opinion piece without citing one attributed example or piece of evidence? Feminism is the belief in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes.

Perhaps with Ms. Stuart's continued JINS education, she'll discover that the actions and ideas she describes are neither feminism nor any form of ideas even vaguely resembling it.

Sean Bagniewski  
Senior

### Feminism has played important, undisputable role in our society

In response to "Radical feminist ideals oppose modern gender equality views" in the Feb. 10 issue of the Index, I would like to remind author Katie Stuart that feminist activists, often in concert with other civil rights leaders (whom she presumably scorns less), have brought us:

- The right to vote.
- The right to reproductive health care.
- The right to attend universities and professional schools.
- The right to pursue jobs for which we are qualified.
- The right not to get expelled from school or fired from our jobs if we become pregnant.
- The right to choose our own mates or not to have a mate.
- The right to compose newspaper columns that are no better than those of our male counterparts and still get them printed in the Index.
- The tradition of working to create the egalitarian society we have not yet achieved.

With respect to Katie's empathy for men who are lampooned on television, I must say that I know of no feminists whose goal is to paint humiliating portraits of men on bad sitcoms. Moreover, I know of few feminists who would claim that men and women are identical. Ironically, on the very day that Katie's column appeared, the Women's Resource Center staged "The Vagina Monologues," a feminist celebration of a peculiarly female body part.

Today the struggle for equality remains necessary and vital. No woman or man wants to be underpaid, exploited, sexually harassed, held back from promotion, excluded from the club where the deals get made or otherwise

treated like a second-class citizen. If you really believe in equal rights, Katie, show some respect for the women and men whose movement you refuse to join even as you take advantage of the benefits they have brought, and continue to bring, you.

Linda Seidel  
Professor of English

### Portrayal of feminists is hurtful, stereotyped in light of their work

In response to the recent anti-feminist column in the Feb. 10 issue of the Index that uncreatively accused feminists of being anti-science, anti-male and, in the tradition of Rush Limbaugh, ugly and hairy, I would like to point out several reasons why one might choose to be a feminist.

First of all, while I might be willing to concede that, as a woman, my pathetic visual-spatial abilities will never allow me to place in the visual-spatial Olympics, I don't understand why they make me more likely to be sexually assaulted, suffer from an eating disorder or be paid significantly less in every type of job (even the verbal ones!). I just don't see how that relates to the fact that the No. 1 cause of death for pregnant women in America is murder.

While I could nitpick at the gross stereotypes and un-facts contained within the "column," I'll instead guess at why a woman would wish to rail against people who are working for change. It is more fun to ridicule and spread lies about people who dedicate their lives to work for change than it is to think about why a person would be an activist. It is painful to realize that we live in a world full of problems. It is hard to see shades of gray instead of simple black and white, and it is uncomfortable to think about sexual assault, murder and poverty. It is funny to think about women with hairy legs.

Instead of making fun of activists, perhaps we should spend a bit more time thinking of what we can do to better our community. That is the goal of most feminists I know. As a feminist, I don't want to punish anyone, but I do want to be able to walk to the library at night and not feel afraid.

As a last note, I know many feminists with hairy legs, and most of them are men. I beg Ms. Stuart not to hate them too much for it. Shaving your legs makes them all itchy and bumpy, and the hair grows back the next day anyway.

Dana Kuhnline  
Graduate Student

### Privatizing social security will severely cut benefits, leave debts

President Bush plans to privatize Social Security by pursuing benefit cuts for future generations, seriously undermining the system's goal of providing a secure retirement safety net for the elderly.

According to the White House, here's how privatization will work: Workers can invest two-thirds of their Social Security taxes into private accounts, with an initial cap of \$1,000 a year. This diverts money away from traditional Social Security, actually making the long-term shortfall worse.

Peter Wehner, White House director of strategic initiatives, admits that privatization does nothing to fix Social Security: "If the goal is permanent solvency and sustainability — as we

believe it should be — then personal retirements accounts, for all their virtues, are insufficient to that task ... To ignore the structural fiscal issues — to wholly ignore the matter of the current system's benefit formula — would be irresponsible."

As Wehner, Republicans and even the President suggest, benefits will be slashed by tying them to slower-growing inflation (currently, they are indexed to wage growth). I am 19, and if I retire in 2050, the average annual benefit that Social Security now promises me is \$20,600, according to the Social Security actuary. The same source predicts a massive 30 percent cut in my benefits if Mr. Bush gets his way with inflation indexing, cutting my benefit down to \$14,400.

Next, if I tried to recoup that money by putting \$1,000 a year into "voluntary" private accounts, my guaranteed benefits would be further reduced by the amount that I would have accrued had I left my money in traditional Social Security (principle plus 3 percent, according to the White House). This is because when I take my money out of Social Security for a private account, it is no longer available to pay traditional benefits. The upshot is that my Social Security check would be reduced to \$9,600.

But I can recover my losses and come out ahead, right? Plain and simple — no! A \$1,000 monthly investment would earn 4.6 percent a year when fees are subtracted (according to the White House and most economists). That miraculous private account would supply me with \$7,500 a year, not nearly enough to make up the cuts. Under the Bush Social Security plan, I would receive \$17,100 (\$9,600 guaranteed plus \$7,500 private account) in benefits, as opposed to the \$20,600 it currently promises me — a 17 percent cut! This assumes that my gamble works out.

I'd be in even worse shape if the markets turned south.

So they want to cut our benefits. They've got another surprise for us too: Vice President Cheney told Fox News on Feb. 6 that this plan would cost \$754 billion in the next decade and "trillions more after that." Wait, you mean to tell me that you want to cut my benefits, AND stick my generation with trillions in debt? Sounds like a raw deal to me.

Adam Littich  
Senior

### Feminists come in all different shapes, sizes and genders

According to Katie Stuart in the Feb. 10 issue of the Index, the presence of hairy legs and the absence of a bra define who qualifies as a feminist. There are quite a few persons on campus who qualify for status as feminist under that definition — most of them are male.

Many of these hairy-legged, braless creatures would be quite surprised to find that Ms. Stuart has classified them as feminists. Equally puzzled will be women who define themselves as feminists, because many lack the requisite hairy legs and do wear bras.

I guess you just never know who among your professors and fellow students is secretly a feminist — and I'm not talking.

Marijke Breuning,  
Associate Professor of  
Political Science

## INDEX

### Feb. 10 Results

as of midnight Tuesday

### Web poll

How did you celebrate Valentine's Day?

38% (13)  
With my Valentine.

47% (16)  
Sad and single.

15% (5)  
It was Valentine's Day?

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

vote online at  
www.trumanindex.com

Did you attend a University Conference session?

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Serving the University community since 1909

### Editorial policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The production offices are located in the Student Union Building. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. Content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff.

The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Index through a majority vote of the Editorial Board, consisting of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

First copies are free. Additional copies are 25 cents.

### Index corrections

- Information in a cutline on Page 20 of the Feb. 10 issue of the Index was incorrect. The roller hockey photograph featured players from the B team that is currently 3-0.

### Letters policy

The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 300 words except at the discretion of the editorial board.

All letters to the editor MUST be typed, double-spaced, signed and include a phone number for verification.

Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at [index@truman.edu](mailto:index@truman.edu) or on our Web site at [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com). Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.