

EDITORIAL

Letters to the Editor

I strongly disagree with Adam Rollins' column arguing against the gender-neutral housing option.

Rollins argued that students that are uncomfortable with their living arrangement can simply move off-campus. What he fails to recognize is that simply moving students who do not fit neatly within the traditional gender binary off-campus is not a solution. It's a dismissal. There are ample reasons why a student interested in GNH might want to remain on campus. Perhaps the community aspect, the accessibility, or a scholarship that makes on-campus housing more financially viable. Whatever the reasons, it is important that the option to provide the most welcoming living situation to the student is made available.

Rollins also claims that "there exists a moral standard of separate living arrangements for unwed couples and it should be the University's role to encourage high moral standards."

There are several things wrong with this argument. First, it is not the role of the university to enforce any type of subjective "moral standards." The role of residence life, as stated in their official mission statement, is to "foster the development of respect, responsibility and accountability in our students," not dictate an arbitrary moral code based off of archaic traditions.

Second, the students involved in this situation are, largely, legal adults, capable of both making their own decisions and dealing with the consequences. Though it should be discouraged, there is no reason residence life should forbid it.

Third, the potential drawbacks do not outweigh the benefits. The current system is based on the heteronormative assumption that same-sex pairs are safer and more comfortable around one another. This idea is problematic as it makes leaping assumptions not only about the students' sexual orientation and gender identity, but also about the factors important to best meeting the needs of students. Housing decisions are best made when based off of common interests and compatibility, not genitalia.

Rollins continues, that the program "implies being different is the problem, rather than not being able to accept the differences of others ... Removing students from unsafe environments does not solve the true problem, only hides it. If we really want Truman's campus to be a safe, inclusive environment, we should be sponsoring programs to educate the bullies and harassers, to encourage students to treat all others with compassion and respect."

It seems clear to me that the only ones who are unable to accept the differences of others are those fighting GNH simply because it creates minute theoretical complications. Further, there is simply no amount of anti-bullying programs that can create a duct tape fix for the inherent problem that the current automatic-placement housing system cares more about genitals than the individual needs of each student.

Not providing an option that could optimize personal and therefore academic growth is counterproductive to the University's mission. Truman may not be able to solve blatant social acceptance problems, but we can adapt and evolve and provide the best living conditions for the needs of all our students.

Laura Van Genderen
Truman State sophomore

Our View

Armchair activism is not useful

Doing next to nothing has never been so cool.

Armchair activism, or passively supporting causes through social media for social approval, has become our generation's way of promoting a cause.

Changing a Facebook status or profile picture does not create real change. It is self-promotion, a way of publically associating with a cause. We gain the social capital without any of the work, dedication or sacrifice that comes with true support of a movement.

No genuine change ever resulted from such little effort. Significant, long-lasting and meaningful change requires more from us.

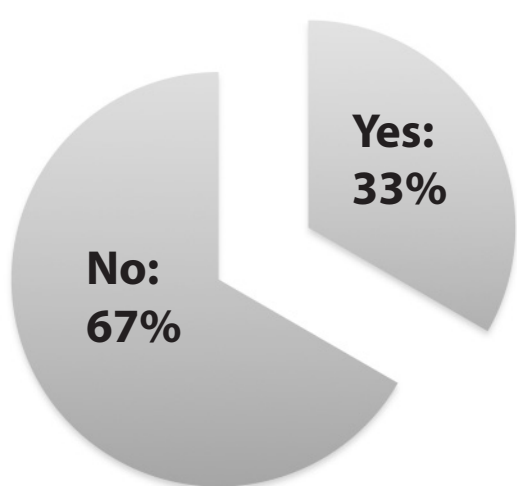
Why are we only willing to offer so little to these causes? Is it because we don't care enough to exert more effort? If a movement had a more direct impact on us, would we be willing to work harder for it? Or, do we simply want to avoid being associated with such a movement if it doesn't result in real change?

Regardless of the reason, we all should seek a cause worthwhile of our time, effort and genuine dedication. And, more importantly, we should be willing to invest ourselves in that pursuit.

When that undertaking succeeds, it will mean infinitely more if we have devoted our hearts and time to it than if we passively supported it for social benefit alone. The cause can be anything you want, but true activism requires passion. Find your interest, seek out where you can make a difference and then work with tireless desire to change the world.

Web Poll

Do you support an added \$1 tax on the sale of violent video games?



In the April 4 edition of your paper, Paige Yungermann's article on a recent Faculty Senate meeting had two quotes from me, claiming I made those comments at the meeting — when in fact I was not even there. I am an alternate Senator, but have not been to a meeting in probably two years.

Last week, I submitted a letter to the editor simply stating that I was not even in attendance at the meeting in question and did not make the statements attributed to me. I was surprised my letter was not printed.

The April 11 edition of the Index included a "correction" stating simply that I had been "incorrectly quoted" the week before.

The Index editors knew by this point that I was not at the meeting in question and that the quotes in the article were actually made by another faculty member. They also knew who that

faculty member was. Why does the correction not state this? Why does the correction not state that I was not at the meeting at all?

Since you did not print my letter (making clear that I was not even at the meeting) and since your correction fails to either mention I was not at the meeting or attribute the words in the original article to the correct speaker (which could have easily been done), I can only conclude one thing. Your reporter and editorial team were too embarrassed by the sloppy reporting to admit the true nature of their error.

This is very disappointing indeed.

Jeff Gall
Truman State history professor

Corrections

The April 4 "Faculty Senate supports domestic partner benefits" page 1 story incorrectly stated history professor Jeff Gall urged other senators to pass the domestic partner benefits resolution and quoted Gall as voicing support for the resolution at the March 28 Faculty Senate meeting. It actually was history professor Torbjörn Wandel who made those statements. Gall did not attend the Faculty Senate meeting on March 28.

The April 11 "Bulldogs set personal bests" page 14 story incorrectly stated Lisa Kucharski and Brittni Campbell were the first two runners in the 4x800 relay. Instead Abby Palm and Katie Hirsch were the first two runners in the 4x800 relay.

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please email index.editor@gmail.com, call us at 660-785-4449 or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo., 63501.

Cartoon

By Megan Archer



Tax scapegoats video games



Adam Rollins

Last month, Missouri State Rep. Diane Franklin (R-155) introduced a bill to the Missouri House of Representatives that is poorly worded and based on dubious evidence.

HB 893, an amendment to Missouri's current sales tax law, proposes to levy a \$1 excise tax on "violent" video games — that is, any game that has received a rating of "Teen," "Mature" or "Adults Only." The bill states, "All such games sold, stored, used, or otherwise consumed in this state must have an issued stamp affixed," according to the Missouri House website.

The generated revenue would be placed in a special fund devoted to two purposes — "community outreach, identification and prevention of mental health conditions associated with exposure to violent video games," and "to fund training of school officials, teachers, and staff and law enforcement

efforts to combat violent crimes," according to the bill's text.

The most poorly worded portion of this bill is the levy of a tax not just on sales, but also on the storage, use or "other consumption" of games. I imagine Missouri stores would be selling games already stamped with proof of the tax payment, but what if I purchase a game from an out-of-state retailer via the Internet? Am I responsible for paying this tax so I legally can use and store the game? What are the consequences if I don't? Also, I'm not sure what "other consumption" might mean. Am I liable simply for spectating while others play games which have not been stamped?

This proposed tax also is too vague in terms of games that it could apply to. Video games can be rated "Teen" for a variety of reasons, such as mild language, mild nudity or comic mischief, all of which might be inappropriate for children but are not violent. Popular games like Rock Band or The Sims are rated "Teen" but are violence-free, unless you count people smashing guitars or getting caught in cartoony dust-ups as violent. Franklin's bill easily could be written to more specifically target violent games without becoming less enforceable.

In addition, I have never heard of a mental health condition that is specifically "associated with exposure to violent video games." The argument that violent video games cause children to become more violent has been debated since the Columbine school shootings, and easily is countered by the argument that children

who are predisposed to violence prefer to play violent video games. Studies on both sides of this argument have been inconclusive, according to a Feb. 11 New York Times article.

Even if violent games cause violent behavior, they are among a whole list of violent media that pervade our culture. Television and movies especially contain a disproportionate amount of violence compared to real life, according to George Gerbner's 1970 study "Cultural Indicators: The Case of Violence in Television Drama." This portrayal of violence can affect social behavior, according to the same study. Video games simply are the latest in a long line of media scapegoated by authority figures who do not want to face the reality that violence is so saturated within our culture as to confound any means of purging it.

After the many recent gun violence tragedies throughout this country, I am afraid that lawmakers might be making hasty decisions. I understand the need to be proactive, to feel like we are taking actions to combat the epidemic of violence throughout our nation. However, we should focus our efforts toward finding verifiably effective methods of preventing violence. We should not so hastily blame a medium that merely reflects the greater problem of violence in our society.

Adam Rollins is a sophomore communication major from St. Charles, Mo.

Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and 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 Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the Editor-in-Chief, managing 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.

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 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. Letters containing personal attacks will not be published. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. They must be submitted by email to index.opinionseditor@gmail.com or on our website at <http://tmn.truman.edu/theindex>. Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.

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