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EDITORIAL

Our View

Policy change takes step in right direction

This weekend, change has found a home at Truman State. The Board of Governor's vote to incorporate sexual orientation into its nondiscrimination policy merits recognition.

This change is the result of countless hours of discussions, deliberation and thought. For all of the effort, work and the understanding from the members of the board, our administration and students and anyone else who has advocated for this issue, thank you.

But it's not done. This measure is a small step, a minor victory in the larger cultural struggle to establish acceptance and end discrimination. It represents one change in policy, but we hope it is indicative of a larger shift in the way we think.

Treating others with the same sense of respect we expect for ourselves might seem like a simple playground rule, but we're still struggling to achieve that goal.

Proposals like this challenge us to live up to the ideals we set for ourselves and to adopt the values that stop drawing dividing lines separating us from those who are not like us.

We should not fear change. We should not fear others. We should strive to view differences as opportunities to learn. Instead of drawing lines of separation, we should find ways to break down walls to incorporate others into our communities, particularly our Truman community.

Universities are the place for this discourse. They should be home to the ideas that challenge us, the thoughts that scare us and the problems that perplex us.

So thank you, to everyone, who made us think about it. Thank you for making us reconsider how we view others. Thank you for pushing us to discuss how national issues fit into our campus community. And thank you for taking these simple conversations and turning them into a decision.

Corrections

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.

Letters to the Editor

Secession petitions reflect broken political system

During the past few weeks, citizens across the United States have banded together to exercise one of their most cherished, God-given and constitutionally-omitted rights — the right to remain ignorant.

Just under a million signatures have appeared on secession petitions covering all 50 states. My issue with these petitioners is not so much that they are ignorant and irrational — my issue with them is that I simply refuse to believe most of these people actually want to secede.

Regardless of whether or not I'm right about that, the only thing these people will receive by signing these petitions is an eye-rolling and dismissive, "Thank you for your time and efforts, but no. Sincerely, President Obama." And that response is likely to evoke emotions even more heavily fueled by the same ignorance that led them to sign frivolous petitions in the first place.

That being said, I think the majority of secession petitioners want nothing more than answers from a government which continually promotes interests that often directly conflict with the interests of its constituents.

But to receive the answers they want, the people must educate themselves and begin to ask the right questions. And I think the question discontented citizens want answered

most is one we can answer ourselves — How did we get here?

Ultimately, there are three things that equal power in the political climate of modern-day America — the educated vote, political prestige and wealth. The basic responsibility of the first two is to operate independently and dependently, to keep each other in check and promote the betterment of society. This is the aim of forming a republic in the first place. However, as the latter has gained the ability to manipulate the first two, the integrity of the entire system has become compromised. What we have left is the an oligarchic style of governance, operating beneath the façade of the republic that once stood.

For far too long, the American government has not been conducting business by or for the will of its people, but rather at the discretion of corporate interests and financially motivated politicians. They use fear and deception to gain control of an uneducated electorate and, when all else fails — I'll call it what it is — outright bribery is used to get legislation favorable to them passed.

As long as we continue to ignore this corruption, we can expect to remain without any real say in who runs the duopoly the United States federal government has become. And as long as we continue to support a disconnected establishment of politicians who simply do not understand day-to-day issues plaguing the lives

of far too many Americans, we have no reason to expect anything more than "politics as usual."

But the beautiful thing about the Constitution of the United States is that no matter how far those in power stray from their original purpose, the true power has and always will lie with the people. But it is up to us to make use of that power. Not by the mean of secession, but instead through the same discourse by which those currently in power came into that role — an equally important combination of educating ourselves and utilizing our ability to influence the Congress.

For us to restore the integrity of our elected officials and to sufficiently promote the principals of our Constitution, it is our duty as citizens to do all that we can to remove the influence of wealth from within our government.

Given the ultimately progressive nature of this society, it is likely if we can solve this issue, many others will take care of themselves in turn. But let me be clear — it is up to us to educate ourselves so when the time comes for our voices to be heard, we have something relevant to say. And if we fail to do this, the struggles we think we face today in this country might be the absolute least of our worries.

Tyler Sigrist
Truman State sophomore

Argument against marijuana legalization is flawed

Jeremy Busch wrote a column last week suggesting that drugs, and specifically marijuana, should not be legalized. Much of Busch's argument, however, lies on the faulty premise that marijuana is a dangerous drug to begin with. While it is certainly true that, over time, the exposure to smoke can cause lung damage, marijuana is much safer relative to cigarettes, which are saturated with carcinogens. One statistic he forgot to add to his infographic was the number of deaths that have ever been caused by an overdose of marijuana: zero.

Busch also suggests marijuana to be a so-called "gateway drug" to harder drugs. If so, what about alcohol or prescription drugs? Should we ban those, too?

Furthermore, the statement Busch cites by NORML actually says almost the complete opposite of what he asserts, viz., that marijuana severely impairs one's driving abilities. In fact, the group suggests that there is no conclusive evidence to support the idea that drivers under the influence of cannabis are any more dangerous than those who are sober.

So why argue in favor of legalization? First, I challenge anyone arguing in favor of banning marijuana to explain to me the difference between

prohibition of alcohol in the 1920's (which failed) and the war on drugs today, and why they think we are winning the former. Banning anything for which there is demand only moves the product out of the oversight of the open market and into the black market, where it is dominated by gangs and cartels.

Secondly, why should we be throwing people in jail for partaking in an activity which brings no harm to anyone else? If someone is using marijuana in the sanctity of their home, be and let be. It's no wonder America's prison population far surpasses that of every other nation. (Not to mention the fact that drug laws very disproportionately impact minorities.)

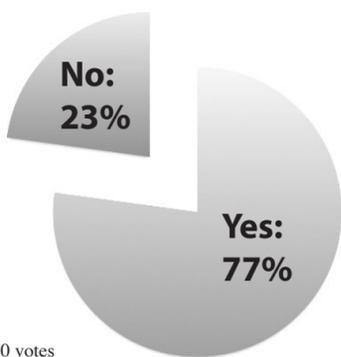
Finally, some worry about the impact the drug has on the behavior of others. I understand this concern, but I ask these people if making the drug illegal has fixed anything. If one truly believes marijuana is a pernicious drug, penalize it as a public health problem; don't criminally penalize the users.

Busch worries that Colorado and Washington might be paving the way for other states to follow suit. I, for one, am welcoming this trend with open arms, and I hope others will share my view.

Michael Baharaeen
Truman State senior

Web Poll

Should the U.S. Armed Forces allow women to serve in combat roles?



*out of 70 votes

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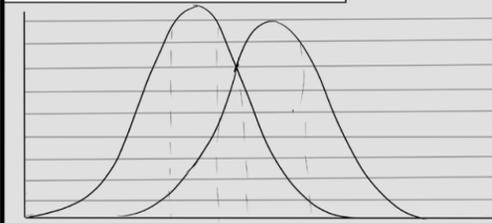
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By Megan Archer

On average, women are smaller than men.



They are shorter, weigh less and have less upper body strength.

On average, women have 25-30% less aerobic capacity, which limits their capabilities for endurance.



Clearly, the average woman is not well suited for combat, compared to the average man.



I didn't ask if the average woman was suited for combat. I asked if I was suited for combat.



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, 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.

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