

EDITORIAL

Our View

Solar panels are a good first step

It was announced earlier this week that Kirksville's Kelly's Furniture would be adding solar panels to its building. These 24 panels installed at this local business represent a small step to decrease its impact on the environment.

What passersby might see as a small cosmetic change to the building is actually something much more. It's a business demonstrating their responsibility and dedication to their greater community.

No one mandated that they install solar panels. A government commission didn't create a new regulation to insist that this small business become more eco-friendly.

Instead, Kelly's Furniture showed initiative. They demonstrated responsibility, not only to the environment but the people who benefit from healthy trees and a flourishing environment.

Hopefully, this is also a mark of leadership that other businesses will follow. We know that not every house or business in town can install solar panels on their roofs, but any small act is a gesture of trying.

It doesn't have to be huge, and it doesn't mean you'll see an immediate impact, but small gestures add up. If your home or business doesn't recycle — start. Lower your thermostat. Start a garden to grow your own vegetables. Reduce, reuse and recycle.

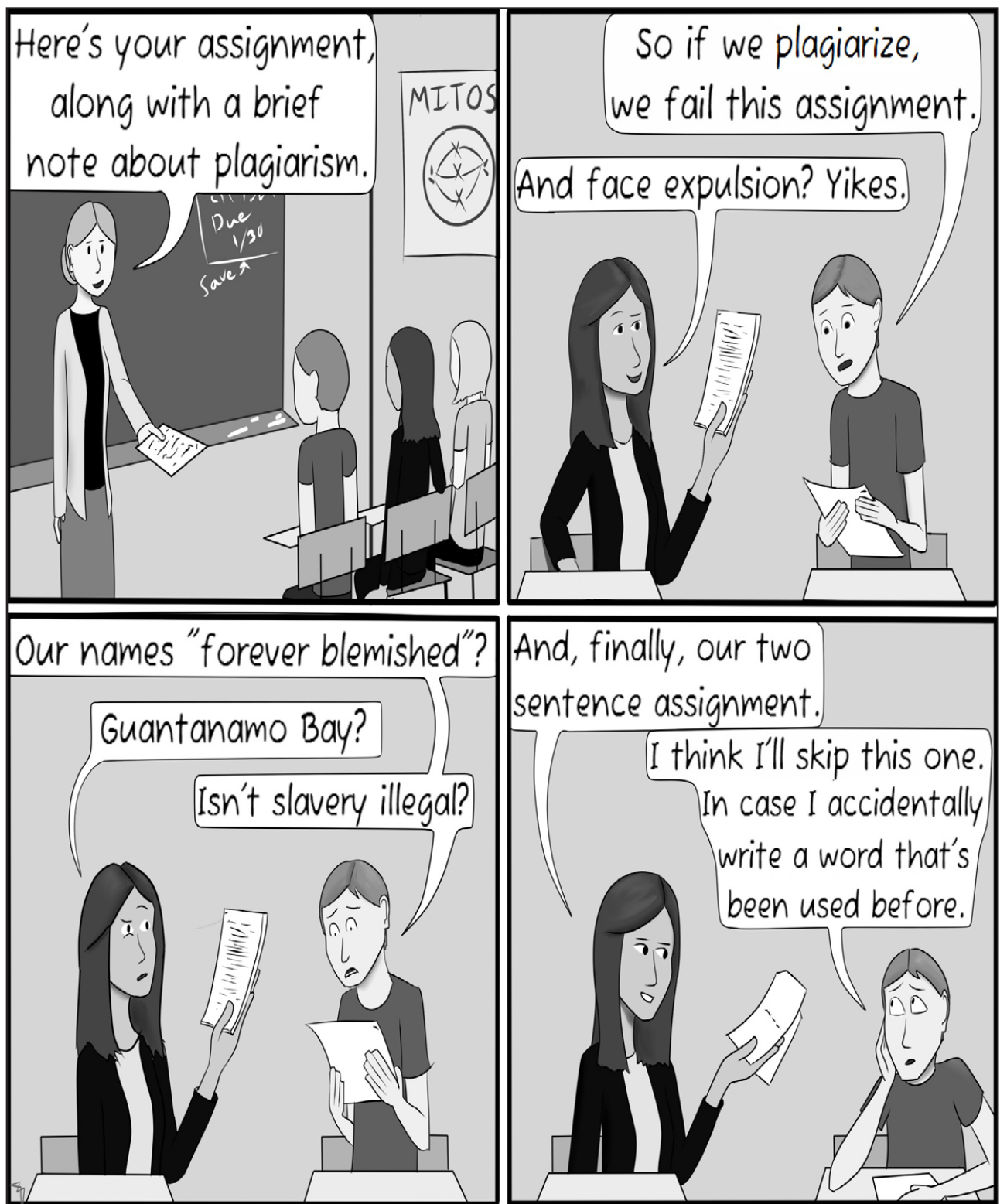
As students, citizens and as future parents of children who will be dealing with the way we treat our environment long after we go, we appreciate and applaud the small gestures and hope that businesses and individuals alike contribute to the future by finding ways to cut down on waste and demonstrating their dedication to their community.

Corrections

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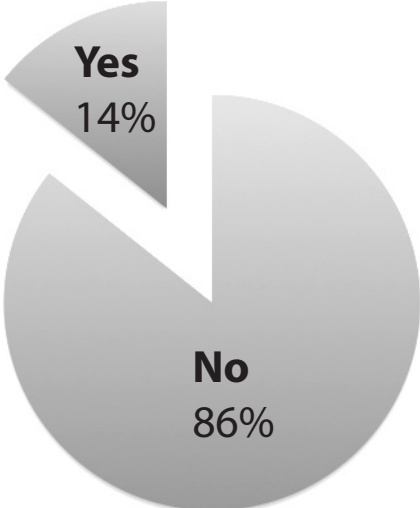
Cartoon

By Megan Archer



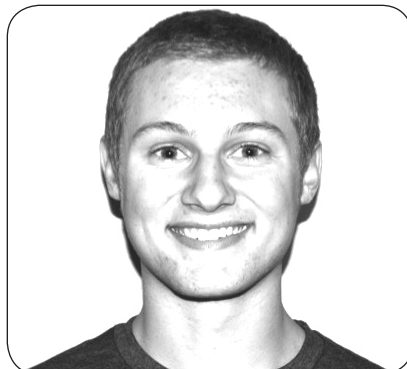
Web Poll

Does the recent homicide in Kirksville impact your sense of personal safety?



Out of 14 votes.

Legal system favors affluent



Jeremy Busch

While returning to Truman State after a stress-free Thanksgiving break, I had an unwelcome confrontation. As I drove through Pike County, I was able to make friends with the local law enforcement, as one of their own decided to pull my car over. We had a great chat about my rebellious nature against the speeding limit, and he left me with a \$112 ticket.

Now, that was not the first time I had an encounter with the police. During high school, I illegally cut through a Walgreens parking lot (I know, shame on me). He let me off without a ticket, even though I had forgotten my driver's license at home.

My first thoughts about the ticket were about the expensive cost, increased insurance rates and the horrible reaction from my dear mother.

However, I soon learned from a friend that I could simply hire a lawyer to have the ticket dropped

from my record. That realization was miraculous, but the thought also occurred that this situation is dumb. I mean, of course I am thankful that the traffic offense is off my record, but the fact that I can pay more to have my illegal act removed seems wrong to me.

The lawyer was able to change the violation to non-moving, which led me to ask friends about their similar experiences. I learned one had a friend who received a minor in possession and had it dropped to a littering charge. That's right. Littering. What is the correlation between a MIP charge and littering? The fact is in the current system, if you have money, you can get off easy. This system is wrong for several reasons.

In a sense, this is a form of bribery. By simply paying extra to have a lawyer "beat the system," you get away with breaking the law in a worse fashion than what you're punished with. Those who are wealthy obviously appreciate the system, but it does not favor those who cannot afford such luxuries. Those who cannot pay extra will end up worse off for committing the same offense as the richer offender, which simply is unjust. This socioeconomic discrimination incorrectly deals with the situation.

In addition, the government should not allow this to happen. The punishment should fit the crime committed. Why should a lawyer be able to downgrade the punishment through fancy words and tactics? I sped, and

I broke the law. It was moving, so therefore I deserve the consequence of a moving violation. No tricks should be able to take that away.

And what happens to the offender in this situation? Well, if he is wealthy, he can simply pay it off and dodge any consequences. Punishments are in place so people learn from their mistakes and are deterred from repeated crime. What lesson does it actually teach when the consequence is signing a check? Consider, for instance, the MIP dropped to a littering charge. What is he going to do? Not litter again? It's a broken system that destroys the reason the law exists in the first place.

When someone breaks the law, they deserve a consequence. Not the consequence for a lesser crime, but for the crime they committed. Instead of the wealthy being able to have violations "fixed," people need to take the punishment they deserve and the government needs to cease allowing these actions to occur. Yes, it is nice to have this luxury, but it is wrong for it to be in place. What was an, "Oh my gosh, my parents are going to kill me," turns into a, "No big deal." The system needs a change, and until that change comes, people will be able to continue to violate the law without dealing with the true consequences.

Jeremy Busch is a freshman communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

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