

Editorial

Grubby, lazy, irresponsible students.

We deserve that title, don't we?

Many voices shout "yes!" Students don't want to work, even when it's available, they say. They take their loan and spend it on beer, nintendoes, and pizza. They sleep all day. And then they have the gall to say they're poor!

Of course, many students have counters to these opinions.

They point out the fact that the average student debt load for a single person was \$25,000 for 1997 graduates. They talk about the projected debt of \$40,000 for graduates of the year 2003.

They might also point out that minimum wage is \$5.40 an hour, and that without connections a higher paying job can be hard to find. It takes sixteen 40 hour work weeks to earn \$3,500 (before taxes and deductions) they answer. Not even enough for tuition, let alone books and rent.

We treat ourselves to beer, food, and treats sometimes, they admit. Should we feel guilty to contribute to the economy? Besides, if we have a maximum student loan, we are still \$4,000 behind the poverty line.

The naysayers retort that they *know* people who wasted their student loans away, who didn't spend a cent of it on tuition, and who are too shiftless to work. This minority is seized on, and made into a symbol, an "everystudent," -- the epitome of all scholars.

This portrait is believed by good and bad people, by the nice and the mean, by the compassionate and the cruel. Many genuinely think that students *are* careless, and don't really understand the life of a student. This uniformed opinion is not excusable, but at least understandable.

It is more difficult to reconcile these beliefs when it is our fellow students who clutch them tight.

Letter...

Re: Campus Thoughts with Ryan O'Connor, Cadre, Nov. 17-

It was heartening to see this student address the very serious question of government's restrictions on freedom of speech and peaceful protest. This article should be published all across the country. Today, citizens' freedoms are truly in jeopardy. From the "pepper-spray" students, to the jailed "pro-life" activists, some of whom have faced jail-time, heavy fines, and even strip searches, prove this erosion of freedoms cries out for strong voices for fairness and justice

As Ryan said, killing abortionists is wrong. They, like pre-born babies, have a God-given right to life, and no one, short of God, has the right to take their lives.

And, pro-choice governments and strident media greatly increase the likelihood of more violence by effectively "silencing opposing views." Peaceful protest are legitimate avenues of public expression.

In the USA, to stand silently/praying before and abortion clinic can be a federal offense, under the 1994 Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) law. And, a contributing member of a pro-life group can risk being prosecuted under the RICO law (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act). Both these abuses have occurred recently.

In Canada, to stand peacefully/prayerfully even one inch inside the bubble zone", the feisty metre area surrounding abortion clinics, is to risk being jailed or fined.

As Ryan points out, to "expand bubble zones" in BC is to further restrict any abortion clinics anywhere. Abortionists were shot at their homes. But, all Canadian abortion clinics use policemen paid by the taxpayers as their private security guards.

Pro-choicers defend the right of a woman to end the life of an unwanted child, and current laws allow her to abort it. She had the freedom to choose.

Pro-lifers see themselves protesting: "unjust" laws that permit the taking of innocent life, and, they cannot in conscience support them. They compare the situation to the "slavery" laws in the US years ago (Public protests feed those enslaved).

Even though both sides in the abortion issue are at cross-purposes, they both want freedom to choose their expression peacefully. This is why Ryan O'Connor's message is important, to caution students about the restrictions on our freedoms in Canada.

From the pepper-sprayed students to the jailed pro-life citizens, society needs intelligent new vices calling for justice and fairness.

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