

COLUMN



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Why the released records matter

University administrators tried very hard to keep you from seeing the information featured on today's front page of The Daily Tar Heel. Before being required by the N.C. Court of Appeals to release parking ticket and phone records pertaining to members of the football team, administrators had staff meticulously redact specific portions of the phone records, then dragged out the legal proceedings — which were handled by state attorneys — for months. They claimed that these records, which the DTH and other media outlets sued for, were protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, an argument that a superior court and the appeals court rightly rejected.

I bring this to your attention not to chastise the University but to shed some light on why the news we have been reporting is worth reporting.

Some of our readers have made it apparent that they don't believe it is.

The DTH, they say, is just trying to attract attention and trash the football team in the process. Why else would it be making such a big deal out of something as trivial as parking ticket records?

There is a reason, and it's a good one.

The records do not prove Butch Davis knew players were doing anything wrong. There are no bombshells that jump out from the pages upon pages of numbers, or even in the records that show some players were clearly not afraid of repeatedly violating the University's parking rules.

But the released records, taken together, gain ground in addressing the question we have been pondering for one year:

How did a handful of UNC football players manage to amass a small fortune of improper benefits, and was that episode indicative of a culture of exceptional privilege for student-athletes at the University?

No story we publish about UNC's football program will offer a complete answer to this question. But the information we continue to report should begin to offer a clearer picture.

What we do is called reporting because it amounts to stating facts, framed in a way that best helps readers understand. The news desks of the DTH are not in the business of telling you what to think. We don't do that, and we don't want to do that.

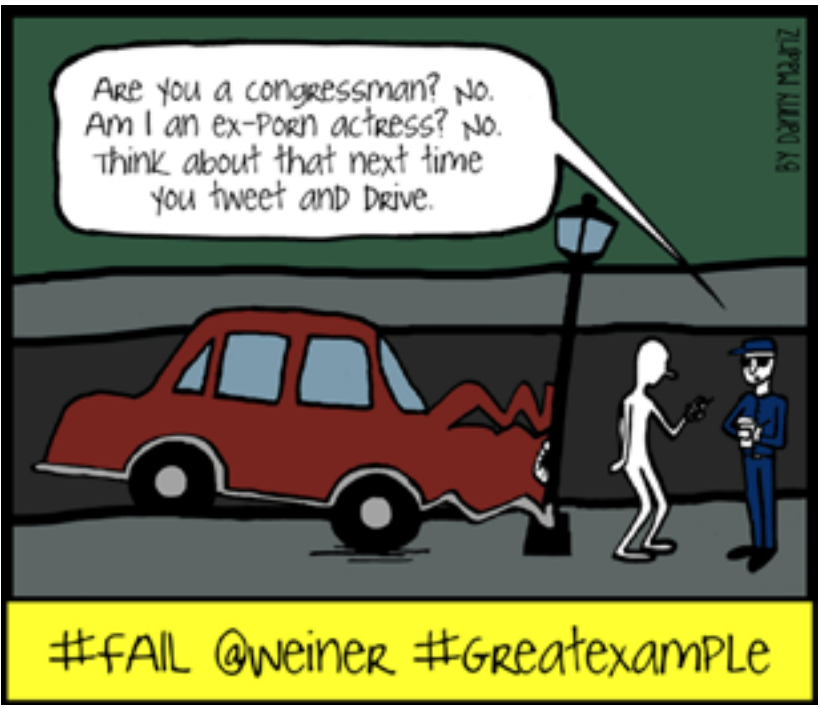
I doubt this statement will stop the criticisms. But, of course, the scrutiny should never stop — on your side or ours.

And I know that some of our readers might never respect the information we offer, but I ask that they recognize what we stand for.

What the records reveal doesn't matter as much as your right to see them. We fought for them so you could know what they said, and so powerful people couldn't withhold them for fear of embarrassment, discomfort or a change in status. Those actions will never be acceptable — legally or ethically.

Public records belong in the light of day, and that's why we find space for them on page one.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Daniela Madriz, madriz@email.unc.edu



Are you a congressman? No. Am I an ex-Porn actress? No. Think about that next time you tweet and Drive.

#FAIL @Weiner #Greatexample

VIEWPOINTS

THE ISSUE: A GOP bill would require identification to vote in N.C. While some see it as an assault on voting rights, others hail it as an important step toward combating voter fraud.



Heather Van Wallendael
Junior English and philosophy major

Voting legislation undermines democratic integrity

Regardless of the motivation behind the Republican endorsed voting legislation, it simply cannot withstand a cost-benefit analysis.

Republicans maintain that the proposed voting legislation is meant to reduce voter fraud, but its effects are widespread and in many cases harmful. Requiring a government issued voter identification would severely affect low-income, minority and elderly voters, and restricting early voting could lower student turnout next November.

The fact that the new legislation seems to target minorities, low-income voters and students has caused a small outcry. These demographics were key players in President Obama's 2008 campaign, and legislation that appears to target them should not be taken lightly, but as an obstruction to democracy.

Of course, circumstantial evidence is not proof. There is no surefire way to prove the potential elimination of some of Obama's supporters in the upcoming election motivated N.C. legislators.

But while the true intent can not be fully understood, the legislation will effectively disenfranchise a significant portion of the N.C. population, many of them Democratic voters.


N.C.'s Fiscal Research Division reported that the voter ID requirement would affect 885,537 registered voters. Given the number of registered voters in the 2008 election reported by the N.C. State Board of Elections, more than 14 percent of registered voters would be affected.

The legislature's proposed bill will make it more difficult for 14 percent of its constituency to vote. Another piece of legislation now in committee would shorten the early voting period, decreasing the amount of time voters have to cast their ballot, discouraging another demographic.

In recent years, North Carolina's voter statistics have been on the rise. In 2008, the N.C. State Board of Elections reported a 70 percent turnout, a full six percent above the national average as well as N.C.'s 2004 turnout. With numbers climbing, it is wrong to discourage the same voters who turned out in 2008 from exercising their constitutional right in 2012.

N.C. Republican legislators claim it is worth it, citing a need to eliminate voter fraud. But their claims aren't substantiated in fact. Based on two recent studies, voter fraud is actually rare. According to a study published by Brennan Center for Justice, it is "more likely that an individual will be struck by lightning than that he will impersonate another voter at the polls." Voter fraud exists, but a fraction of a percent is nowhere near enough to justify the 14 percent of N.C. voters who will be caught in the crossfire.

Given the comparison between voter fraud statistics and the numbers that will be adversely affected by new legislation, a conclusion seems glaringly obvious. If the GOP intends to use new voting regulations to reduce Obama's support in N.C., the legislation will be both effective and borderline unconstitutional, but if the goal is to improve the voting process, the proposed legislation will do more harm than good.



Carlie Sorosiak
Senior English and American studies major

Voter identification crucial for democratic ideals

It's idealistic, albeit naive, to think that voter fraud is non-existent, rare or inconsequential, especially when the legitimacy of our representative republic is at stake.

We are long past the days when election board members in less populated areas knew all the people in their precinct. Who or what is stopping voter fraud? Implementation of a proven impersonation detection method is essential.

North Carolinians should be required to show government issued photo identification to register and cast their ballots. A 2011 N.C. Civitas Institute survey revealed that only roughly one percent of registered voters do not have a photo ID. Identification is required to prove one's age, board an aircraft and enter a government building, so why shouldn't voter integrity, under the American value of democracy, be protected as well?

Opponents of such legislation have suggested that accusations of voter fraud lack credible evidence. Democratic political pundits seem to fall back on accusations that voter fraud is merely right-wing propaganda, constructed fallaciously and aimed at invoking an element of fear in the minds of the public.

Perhaps they are unaware of the decision in the 2008 Supreme Court case Crawford v. Marion County Election Board, in which the court stated that voter fraud issues "have been documented throughout this Nation's history by respected historians and journalists." Far from lacking, the evidence is astounding.

For example, it was "estimated that at least 100,000 fraudulent votes out of 1 million (10 percent of the city's population) had been cast" for the 1982 Illinois governor's race in Chicago, according to the Heritage Foundation.

Both a 2003 mayoral election in Indiana and a 2005 state senate race in Tennessee were invalidated due to voter impersonation and fraud. As recently as 2009, ACORN submitted up to 400,000 phony voter registration forms — including one for the late actor Paul Newman and another for Mickey Mouse.

Even with the implosion of leftist voter registration organizations such as ACORN, many voters are still concerned about voter fraud, especially in N.C., which President Barack Obama carried to victory in 2008 by less than 15,000 votes. A small number of votes have the capacity to make or break an election.

Radical leftists contend that mandating photo IDs marginalizes minorities and the poor by suppressing their votes. Furthermore, leftists suggest that racism and bigotry are key to understanding Republican motives. These boilerplate accusations ignore the fundamental issue of integrity, and integrity is crucial to the preservation of democracy.

With the tool of photo identification, election officials might now begin to crack down on voter impersonation. True — presenting a photo ID to vote might change the course of the 2012 elections; the outcome would more accurately reflect the will of the legitimate voting population, including all minorities and the poor.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's a very dangerous way to drive. A person who is driving while talking on a cellphone causes the same risk as someone who is driving drunk."

Joe Capowski, Former member of the Chapel Hill Town Council

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A fare thee well to Horace Williams Airport

TO THE EDITOR

Friends of the state of North Carolina, lend me your ears; I write to bury Horace Williams Airport, not to praise it. The evil that this airport has supported shall not persist; The good shall not be noted or missed; so let it be with this airport. The University of North Carolina hath told you that the airport stands in the way of progress: if it were so, it was a grievous fault; and grievously hath the airport answer'd it. Here, under leave of the leaders of the University, and legislators in Raleigh; so are they all honourable men. Come I to write for the airport's funeral. The airport faithfully allowed me to serve the medical needs of the children of North Carolina; but our leaders say that it stands in the way of progress; and all of their attorneys are honourable men. The airport stands as a technological milestone in our state in which aviation was founded. Did this in Chapel Hill seem ambitious? When that the poor of the state have been unable to access Chapel Hill for care, the airport hath provided doctors and nurses the ability to inform, teach and treat; yet the attorneys say the airport is not needed; and they are all honourable men. You all did see that the plans for Carolina North, upon which the airport stands, was to provide high technology to the state, to the benefit of us all; forgetting the ambition of those who own land nearby. Waiting to profit from construction and development; and, sure, they are all honourable men. I write not to disprove what they spoke, but here I am to write what I do know. You all did love the airport once, not without cause: what cause witholds you then, to mourn for it? O judgment! The first building upon this airport shall not be a school of technology but of law. And men may have lost their reason, but not the attorneys who are our leaders. Bear with me; my heart is in the air there above the airport. And I must pause until honourable men allow it come back to me. With apologies to William Shakespeare,

James P. Loehr, M.D.
Division of Pediatric Cardiology
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South unfairly targets wearers of cargo shorts

TO THE EDITOR

Editor, I have a problem. I am a northerner working in the area for the summer and I have long abided by American principles. When I heard I would be living below the Mason-Dixon, I assumed that Southerners too would live by the American code. I thought Carolinians would hold freedom near and dear to their hearts. Instead, I have found that Southern hospitality is a sham. Instead of celebrating individual freedoms, they spit in the faces of those who are different. I am talking about the alienation of cargo shortwearers. In Boston, they are not a problem. For some reason, though, they are sin in the South. Girls scorn you at the bars, refusing to talk to you the second they see your surplus storage. Guys laugh and call you "pocket boy" or, the more creative, "trash." Emma Lazarus would be rolling in her grave. Why is this the case? Why are there always two pockets of separation between society and myself? I urge the students of Chapel Hill to change. I call on them to accept the tired and poor cargo-d masses yearning to breathe free. After these trials and tribulations I wonder, "Can we all just get along?"

George Huber
Boston University

Kvetching board™

kvetch:

v.1 (Yiddish) to complain

I can forgive a lot, Church Street: the noisy jackhammers, the creepy workers, even the ugly orange signs. But I will never, ever forgive you blocking my most direct path to Chipotle.

To my younger brother who is an incoming freshman, please stop asking me questions about Carolina. You will learn in time, oh you will learn...

Thank you, Sakai, for scrambling my discussion board posts into incoherent paragraphs of letters, numbers and symbols. Maybe if I drink enough sake, I'll be able to read it.

If these freshmen don't learn how to get to one side of the sidewalk and out of my way, it's going to get real.

To the two girls in the Pit who desperately want to be kvetched about: this is for you. Now stop being flattered, the summer issue doesn't really count.

Send your one-to-two sentence entries to opinion@dailytarheel.com, subject line 'kvetch.'

THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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SPEAK OUT

WRITING GUIDELINES

• Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.

• Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.

• Students: Include your year, major and phone number.

• Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.

• Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.


SUBMISSION

• Drop-off: at our office at 151 E. Rosemary Street.

• Email: opinion@dailytarheel.com


Weekly QuickHits

A new king?




Golfer Rory McIlroy obliterated the field at the U.S. Open this weekend. We're not ready to crown Rory just yet, but he should have no trouble enjoying what sometimes comes along with winning golf majors...

Kent Emanuel




The UNC pitcher threw nine scoreless innings, allowing only four hits and one walk in a College World Series game against Texas this week. The complete game shutout was the first in the CWS in five years.

Smoky conditions



Fires in parts of North Carolina created smoky conditions in Chapel Hill on Tuesday. Most of us were disappointed that when we walked outside there was no free barbecue, as many had anticipated.


Notice of allegations



The NCAA handed down a laundry list of allegations to UNC's football program on Tuesday. It never feels good to be so publicly reprimanded and Tar Heel fans deserve better from our athletic program.

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