

Unheeded Advice

Statesman has, over the years, printed dozens of editorials pleading with students to exercise their rights to vote. The results of these efforts is undeterminable, but one thing is certain: too few people are voting.

So why bother with another editorial on this same topic? What more can be said? Why should we now think students will finally listen?

So we're not going to fill this space with another long-winded editorial that falls upon deaf ears anyway, right?

Wrong.

We have said in the past and we will continue to say that the right to vote must be exercised by every eligible member of the community. No one could be so satisfied that they feel the right to vote superfluous. No one is so content that the ability to make changes is unnecessary to them.

The basis of a democratic system is that all members of the democracy have input into governing themselves. Those who govern must be responsible to the people who vote, or else their actions go unchecked and become irresponsible. Each time we have the chance to vote we should, or else we all become pawns in someone else's game.

You should vote. And you should urge your neighbor to vote. And when enough people do, maybe then we'll have no need to write another "vote" editorial.

Air Your Views

Tomorrow night, students will once again have a chance to air their views and complaints to administrators when Polity convenes another one of its Town Meetings.

This third meeting, to be held at 8 PM in the Lecture Center, will deal specifically with the topic of Public Safety.

We urge all members of the campus community to attend and express their opinions. Such gatherings of students and administrators have proven profitable in the past, serving as an open forum for exchange of ideas.



— LETTERS —

Laudable Oration

To the Editor:

After hearing Jim Fuccio's emotional oration at the Senate meeting on Feb. 9, I was intrigued by the "unsubstantiated allegations" he spoke of and decided to investigate the matter.

One of Fuccio's major points was the unnecessary lapse of time between the first invalidated election in October and the upcoming one tomorrow. This particular point also concerned me because the campus media reported that the elections were delayed due to the unavailability of machines and the lack of money to sponsor the new election. This seems to be a reasonable explanation for the delay, but my research proved otherwise.

When I spoke to George Wolfe, the deputy commissioner of the Suffolk County Board of Elections, he provided me with some very interesting information about the use of the voting machines. He confirmed the previous explanation of the unavailability of the voting machines after a presidential election, but that the ballot boxes, typically used in Polity elections, were available. He further conveyed to me that these ballot boxes had been available since Nov. 5 (one day after the presidential election). In addition to this disturbing news, I learned that as of Nov. 21 no one from the Polity Election Board had called to inquire about the use of such boxes for the rescheduled election. This information led me to seriously question the delay of the second election.

It seems to me that the decision to use voting machines was inappropriate in light of the urgency of third election. I assume that this decision was justified by decreasing the cost of the election by using these machines; however, this decision has been the major element in delaying the election to the present date. The Election Board was apparently operating under the notion that Polity was in a poor financial situation, and therefore, opted for a less expensive method. This information could only have

been transmitted by the treasurer, who miraculously failed to recognize a \$76,000 surplus in the budget until immediately prior to the upcoming election.

If the Election Board had chosen to use ballot boxes, a speedier election could conceivably have been held soon after the so-called "invalid" election in October. Because of their ineptness to manage the situation, the challenger in the treasurer's race was put at an unfair disadvantage. Furthermore, the whole freshman class has suffered because of a few incompetent, power hungry people. It seems to me that Fuccio's remarks at the Senate meeting were not just vindictive and political, but are worth considering before going to the voting booth.

Dawn Wills
Kelly C Senator

Abolish Earmarking

To the Editor:

In the past several weeks, much has been written in letters to the editor and viewpoints in Statesman concerning the upcoming vote to eliminate the specific earmarking of funds through referenda. Most of this criticism has been negative, and unfortunately, based on misconceptions of fact.

First, a short explanation of what the controversy is all about is in order. Tomorrow, when you are voting in the elections, you will be asked to vote on a number of referenda. One of these is to amend the Polity Constitution to prohibit referenda from being held which would earmark specific funds to a club. An example of this type of referendum is "Fund Club X at \$2 per student per semester."

There are many reasons for eliminating the earmarking referendum from the Constitution, some of which have become increasingly important in recent years.

The earmarking of funds by referendum bypasses the budgetary process, which allows all clubs to speak to a committee of senators, and non senators.

Earmarking by referenda

results in only one side of the issue being heard, the clubs' side. The other side, that of availability of funds and past service to the campus community relative to all other clubs, is not heard by the students signing the clubs earmarking petition. (At least 2,400 signatures are required to put the referendum on a ballot.)

In a recent letter to the editor, Lewis Liebler, Chairman of the Democratic Socialist Forum, calls the attempt to prohibit earmarking of funds by referendum an "undemocratic action." In actuality, receiving funds through a referendum is the most unequitable means of obtaining funds possible. Earmarking funds by referendum is inherently biased and unfair to smaller clubs that do not have the manpower to obtain the signatures needed to have the earmarking referendum placed on the ballot.

There is no limit to the amount of funds that can be earmarked by referendum. In theory, therefore, more funds can be earmarked than Polity has available. Currently, the athletic department and NYPIRG have earmarked for themselves \$135,000 which represents 18 percent of available funds. The \$135,000 represents an increase in the NYPIRG and athletic department budgets by 500 percent and 120 percent respectively. The funding, and therefore the existence of smaller clubs is at stake with funding by referendum.

Ron Serpico
Sophomore Class Representative

Good Choice

To the Editor:

Two cheers to Stony Brook for appointing, at long last, a graduate dean, Robert Sokal, who is a humane person as well as an outstanding scholar. I can't give the third cheer until I see who is named to replace the silent and mysterious Sidney Gelber, the man whose presence at Stony Brook was so invisible over the last decade or so.

Edward Fisinger

Statesman

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