



BYU Political Review



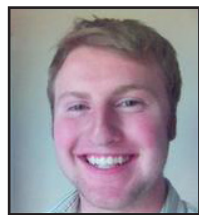
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The Politics of Inclusion

Max Stoneman



Questions of exclusive action have been voiced as students passed through several debacles during BYU's Winter Semester. Just opening to the Reader's Forum in the Daily Universe could give anyone the sense

that unless you fit a certain mold, you don't belong on this campus ("Go somewhere else if you don't like it!"). I would argue that this isn't true, that the principles of inclusion and community are foremost among the University's aims (by inclusion I mean positive participation by students and welcoming involvement from administrators in regard to student life). But in the transition from Church doctrine to university policy (and yes, there is a difference between the two), some students and administrators have taken it upon themselves to draw the lines that separate those "worthy" of the BYU experience from those that are not with broad strokes. Some recent examples of this exclusivity:

Would-be reformers have been willing to question certain aspects of BYU's Honor Code, a document that has been repeatedly adjusted over the years (and those of you reading this while not wearing socks with your shoes, just thank your lucky stars). Yet, those who call for amendment have all met with the same resistance by students who

simultaneously accuse them of actively *breaking* the Honor Code and assuming that if they want to change one thing, they want to throw the whole thing out. While I have yet to hear even one student openly advocate a complete break with the Honor Code, I have heard many people claim that wanting to amend the Honor Code is the same as saying that "morality is outdated." As past modifications and current allowances show (think moustaches), changing the Honor Code doesn't mean abandoning it. Another poor argument heard around campus says that, since students originally came up with the Honor Code, students have to live with it. While based in fact, the argument doesn't hold water for this reason: if we came up with it, why aren't we allowed a voice in what it looks like now? Why can't the student body be involved and participate with the administration regarding the Honor Code? Why are we left in the cold? I could argue for well-groomed beards until I'm blue in the face, but until students are given the same power in amending that they had in creating the Honor Code, we no longer own it. It is now someone else's Code that we happen to sign. The cry for inclusion in this process may be "No Shavin' without Representation!"

Another line drawn this semester was a bold

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Why Mormons Shouldn't be Democrats

Amy Worthington



Many Latter Day Saints are Democrats. While they cite numerous reasons for their political affiliation, one of the explanations I here most commonly is that they wish to take care of the

poor, the needy, the less fortunate. After all, aren't we commanded in the Doctrine and Covenants 52:40 to "remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted"? "He that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple." Unfortunately, turning to the Democratic Party to alleviate the suffering of the poor is not only ineffective, it is not in keeping with the counsel and advice of the Church. There are a number of things lacking in government welfare programs which make it incompatible with the doctrines of the Church.

Problem 1: Lack of Agency

We are commanded to take care of the poor, but we are expected to choose this, rather than be compelled. In a BYU devotional on April 12, 1977, Ezra Taft Benson said, "It has been fundamental to our way of life that charity must be voluntary if it is to be charity. Compulsory benevolence is not charity." Thus, even if we were to assume that the government was effectively reallocating resources to benefit the poor, no one is being blessed for sacrificing to take care of their fellow man when the government forces you to do so. There is no growth or charity on the part of the giver. At the risk of being accused of zealotry, I would compare compulsory government charity to a plan one of our brothers offered in the pre-mortal existence which would force us to act correctly. And we all

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remember where those who followed that plan ended up...

Problem 2: Welfare Destroys Self-Reliance

In a conference address in October 2003, Elder Dallin H. Oaks stated, "The growth require by the gospel plan only occurs in a culture of individual effort and responsibility. It cannot occur in a culture of dependency. Whatever causes us to be dependent on someone else for decisions of resources we could provide for ourselves weakens us spiritually and retards our growth toward what the gospel plan intends us to be." Welfare offers an easy way out. It shelters individuals from the consequences of poor decisions which might otherwise prompt positive change. It skews the incentive structure to favor laziness. While some may legitimately use government welfare programs, there is no denying that it can be used to encourage a host of vices.

Problem 3: Welfare Requires No Work

In the midst of the Great Depression, the Church instituted its own welfare program. "Our primary purpose was to set up...a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift, and self-respect be once more

established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." In contrast to FDRs "New Deal," which offered something for nothing, the Church created a model of how we are to cope with poverty: through hard work and then help (obtained only after planning with a bishop how to fix poverty in the long term, working as much as possible, and creating a line of accountability.)

Problem 4: Lack of Authority

Ezra Taft Benson as Secretary of Agriculture said, "A category of government which...poses a grave danger to our continued freedom is the activity NOT within the proper sphere of government. No one has the authority to grant such powers, as welfare programs, schemes for re-distributing wealth, and activities which coerce people into acting in accordance with a prescribed code of social planning." No mincing with words there. Although Benson delivered this address as a government leader and would therefore not be official Church doctrine, Benson was correct. As individuals we do not have the right to coerce others into sharing, therefore, we cannot grant that right to the government. It is not within the legitimate jurisdiction of the government to do so.

Problem 5: Lack of Morality

Also in a BYU devotional, Ezra Taft Benson states, "Every individual who accepts an unearned government gratuity is just as morally culpable as the individual who takes a handout from taxpayers' money to pay his heat, electricity, or rent. There is no difference between them. You did not come to this University to be a welfare recipient...You are not here to be a parasite or freeloaders...By doing this you contribute to the problem...Society may rationalize immorality, but God cannot condone it." Benson states that it is immoral to accept government welfare. It follows that it would also be immoral to support government welfare in general.

We live in an imperfect world. No political party is perfect and none ever will be. There may be valid reasons to be a Democrat (though I have yet to find any). However, Democratic Party cannot be validated based on its social welfare programs (Medicaid, Medicare, Welfare, WIC, food stamps, subsidized housing, etc.). If you are a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Democratic Party, the time has come to validate your membership in the Democratic Party using something besides welfare programs or else opt for compassionate conservatism.

Amy is from Orem, Utah majoring in Political Science. Her favorite movie is Life is Beautiful.

The Unfunded Mandate Reform Act: Reflections of a Penitent Ideologue

Seth Moore



The problem of unfunded mandates is neither new nor unusual. Since the size of the federal government exploded in the 1950s, congress has continually searched for innovative

ways to claim credit for providing new benefits while dodging accountability for the costs. For example, the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act required cities to cut ramps into the curbs of all intersections with a public sidewalk by 1995. Cities were already cutting the ramps but at the pace dictated by their budget availability. The public generally applauded Congress' effort to accelerate the process. What the public didn't know was the draconian cost being forced on cities. In the case of Philadelphia, compliance would have required the city's entire municipal budget for nearly three years. The mandate was completely untenable, but rather than own up to their mistake, Congress made a backdoor appeal to delay enforcement of the mandate to give cities more time. At no point did they revise the legislation or acknowledge the impossible cost of their program.

In like manner the Congress has forced

expensive changes in policy on the environment, education, health care, labor, and welfare while passing the cost onto the cities and states that then must pay the bill and answer to tax payers. Congress escapes responsibility for high taxes and claims credit for the programs. Conservative deregulators like myself have reacted by lobbying for strict federalism and the complete elimination of federal regulation in these fields. Many of us felt betrayed when the new Republican controlled government did not initiate the kind of federal bureaucratic massacre we have been dreaming about since the Reagan administration. Instead they instituted the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act (UMRA). The act did not prohibit the use of unfunded mandates but instead required greater transparency in their costs. Anytime congress proposes an amendment or new piece of legislation that passes costs onto the states or private industry it must first refer it to the Congressional Budget Office so the cost can be projected. If the cost to the cities and states exceeds 50 million the legislation must receive a simple majority to even be considered on the floor.

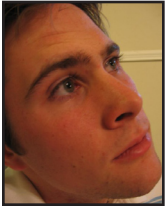
The results have been impressive. The CBO reported that between 1995 and 1998 more than a dozen new mandates were proposed. After the release of the CBO cost analysis, all but two were

defeated or amended to reduce the cost below the 50 million dollar threshold. The remaining two were an expansion of the federal minimum wage and decreased federal funding for the food stamp program. Since the UMRA no mandate has even approached the multibillion dollar budget busters of the 70s, 80s, and early 90s. Of course the legislation isn't perfect. It ignores mandates created prior to the UMRA and also has different standards for some of the giant programs like Medicare and the welfare program that give more administrative flexibility to the states. It also affords substantially less protection to private industry. Despite these flaws, the results suggest that we deregulators can make substantial gains without destroying the federal government. While I am still loath to admit the existence of "good government", I must admit this case illustrates the shortsightedness of my zealotry. It is difficult to argue against "good government" accountability standards when those standards definitely limit the scope of government expansion. I still await that glorious day when the federal government is expelled from the affairs of the states, but until we reach that "government-free" stage I suppose "good government" may not be such a bad alternative.

Seth is from Albuquerque, New Mexico majoring in Political Science. His favorite movie is Better Off Dead.

Immigrants Like Us

Timothy Brownrigg



My family is Irish on both sides. From my mother, I inherited the blood of Orange Irish immigrants from Northern Ireland. From my father came the legacy of the Catholics through immigrants from Ireland proper. Although members of my family have been in the U.S. for generations, we still take pride in telling everyone who will listen about our Irish heritage. We have the gift of blarney, after all.

On April 10 this year, a new generation of immigrants gathered around the country waving American flags and peacefully pressing for more rights. This time, Latin Americans are the newcomers pleading for acceptance. They, like countless people before them, have abandoned homes and families in the hopes of finding a better life here.

Of course, there are problems associated with large immigrant populations; there always have been. The point is, however, that these people have come to our shores to work. They want to contribute to America, not steal from it.

As it stands, the immigration process remains a drawn out, expensive, and difficult procedure for most Latin American workers, most of whom do not have the resources to qualify for resident status in the U.S. In essence, they may choose either to remain in poverty where they are or to risk the dangers of a life as an illegal alien in America. Why not give them a third option?

Both houses of Congress are currently debating immigration bills that will either help or hurt immigrants' status in the U.S. If effective legislation is passed, a road will be paved for them to stay and work legally in this country. Legal resident status will indicate that immigrant workers will not only have access to American jobs and public services but that they will have to pay American taxes and abide by American laws, as well.

Hispanics make up the country's largest minority group, and we can choose now how we want to treat them. Legal status for millions of immigrant workers would signify millions of new taxpayers for America's economy at a time when government spending is at a climax. More importantly, it will allow a generation of people right of entry to the American dream that honest hard work leads to self-betterment. We owe the Latin American people that chance.

After all, there is no one among us who is not descended from an immigrant somewhere along the line.

Tim is from Cleveland, Ohio majoring in International Relations. His favorite band is Lifehouse.

How Low, How Low

Tim Taylor



A recent discussion thread on the Political Review's online group asked the questions, "How much should the Church be involved in dictating politics," and "How much are we obligated to follow their advice when they are speaking about political ideas versus religious ones?" I found it telling that immediately below the topic heading was an ad for Yahoo! Messenger referring to subscription rates and asking, "How low will we go?" The nature of this faux-critical question reveals a problematic understanding of the Church. Beyond the fundamental problem of asking whether or not the Church *should* do anything (God is the ark-steadier, not us), the question suggests we ought to parse the doctrine according to our own rationale. While critical thought is at the center of academic experience, it is troubling when it seeks to arbitrate areas that it cannot legitimately claim, including and especially the one true religion of the one true God.

The first question asks how fully the Church should be involved in politics. This is moot since the Church is completely engaged, from steeple to sidewalk, in the political arena. Not that it often offers formal positions on issues, but that the principles it espouses completely apply themselves to politics. Our religion is not lived in a vacuum, nor only in one's own heart. Rather, its laws go beyond the private sphere to the governing of interpersonal relations and their most developed manifestation, the political. To say otherwise is to truncate the latter-day gospel's unique claim to holding all truth, including political truths, under its aegis. This is tough doctrine for some. In a report opposing the appointment of BYU's Thomas Griffith to the D.C. circuit court of appeals, the Alliance For Justice's worst accusation is that "Griffith believes that lawyers 'must reject the tendency to place [their] professional and religious lives in separate compartments.'" The professional—or political—and the religious exist

incommensurably only so far as we limit true principles to the comfortable, but limited, private realm.

The second question asks how much we are obligated to follow the Church's political advice. The question itself is troubling. It seems to suggest we should parse the words of the prophets, decide which are doctrine, and then be free to ignore or even oppose the rest. In such a hair-splitting exercise, however, one always risks falling on the wrong side, believing too little instead of too much. And even if certain oppositional stances are legally defensible ("it's never been said in general conference," or "it's not stated as such in the scriptures") there is a certain current of thought the Brethren espouse that, while never made explicit, nevertheless palpably exists. It was best termed by Boyd K. Packer in a BYU devotional as "the unwritten order of things."

It is difficult to own up to that order in the academic world. In an environment where critical thought is celebrated, it is easy to extend the bounds of that criticism to areas it cannot sufficiently engage. It is arguable that intelligent discourse can increase our understanding of the gospel and aid us in a rational exploration of all its facets. True, it can. But not necessarily. It can just as easily stultify the truths of the gospel, disfiguring them in the distorted accoutrements concomitant to purely human reasoning. Thus, while it is trendy in the university setting to push the boundaries of our assumptions and, above all, question, question, question, true religion is exempt from this criticism. Its foundation is faith, not intellect, and is infinitely superior. To answer the questions from this more enlightened, if less swanky, viewpoint then, the answers are simply, first, the Church can dictate politics as much as it seems fit, and second, we are obligated to follow all its advice. And in the end, you'll just have to take that on faith.

Tim is from Cardston, Alberta majoring in Political Science. His favorite book is The Old Man and the Sea.

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Politics of Inclusion

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one: firing Todd Hendricks. An ultimatum to retract his critical statement on BYUSA elections in the newspaper or face his wife's pregnancy without health insurance was an extremely exclusionary move for the Dean of Students. While simultaneously decrying Hendricks' disloyalty, Dean Heperi has effectively evaded the original issue that started the debacle: the overwhelming consensus on campus that the BYUSA elections of the past three years are a sham and are indicative of a dysfunctional system. Worse than this, standard BYU protocol, which maintains an employee should receive verbal and then written warnings before termination, was completely ignored. Again, the issue of relevant student participation in any policy-making process is completely ignored and, in the case of Todd Hendricks, any attempts at reform are met with open hostility. I am not delusional; I know

that BYU is not a democracy. However, that is not tacit permission for BYU to be run like a dictatorship, either.

Finally, the sensitive subject of homosexual BYU students must be brought up. Full disclosure: I do not advocate homosexual activities that break the law of chastity or violate Church standards. After the visit from Soulforce last week, I think that, from a university policy viewpoint, BYU has an amazing opportunity to shelter and include members of the Church who have homosexual inclinations and strengthen them in the Gospel. I have heard so many people ask, "Why would they come here? Why don't they go somewhere else?" I have heard the same unfair questions about students struggling with inactivity, testimony issues and even transgressions. Those questions essentially take the decisions of agency away from a voiceless group and assume (wrongly) that we know the hearts of others. We *must* assume that there are compelling reasons for any homosexual student to come to BYU and sign the Honor Code

(to strengthen their testimony, to avoid temptation at other universities, etc.) We all need to work on extending the hand of fellowship and compassion to our brothers and sisters by affording them the same opportunities that we have. As to the politics of inclusion, Brigham Young University can centralize a positive, abstinence-based message to all single students (including homosexuals) and provide a haven for those with same-sex inclinations. By creating a policy that ensures safety from reprisal and openness in dialogue, we can let the "underground" students come up for air and include them in our educational environment.

In conclusion, BYU is a truly amazing institution with an honorable mission. By applying the politics of inclusion in these and other aspects of student life, our administration could foster a greater sense of community and accomplishment to our education.

Max is from Provo, Utah majoring in Middle East Studies. His favorite book is The Stand.

Illegal Immigration: Duh! It's not Legal!

James Larsen



We are indeed a nation of immigrants. Most of us have ancestors who came to this great land in pursuit of better lives. A symbol of freedom and hope, the Statue of Liberty welcomes the poor and the outcast of all nations. But surely she must frown upon the waves of illegal immigration which threaten America's social and economic well being.

Many would water down terminology used to describe the unlawful entry of aliens and call such law breakers "undocumented workers." The premise of their argument is that illegal immigrants take the jobs that Americans either do not want or cannot fill. They assume that employers in hotel, landscaping, fast food, and other industries need the labor that those without green cards and visas are more than willing to provide.

I will not contend this argument. I do not know many Americans who enjoy changing bed sheets or harvesting fruit for a living at or below

subsistence wages. However, those who promote this side of immigration often sweep under the rug a wealth of real problems and injustices associated with illegal immigration.

I recently heard of an immigrant woman from South Africa who obtained a work visa. As required by law, she registered regularly with the local post office. Though an educated professor in African genealogy, she had difficulty satisfying the employment requirements needed to renew her visa. Frustrated, she returned to her native land when the visa expired.

Contrast this honesty and respect for regulations with those who smuggle themselves over the border and remain illegally in the United States for years. These "undocumented workers" then go on to "strengthen our economy."

Is this fair to those who spent months, years and thousands of dollars to fill out papers and meet immigration requirements? What does a policy of amnesty say to their diligence and dedication? Should illegal immigrants continue to crowd and strain our schools and health care services? Is it fair for California hospitals to shutdown due to

the rising emergency room costs from uninsured illegal immigrants? How can employers continue to reap the benefits of cheap labor but not pay into the Social Security System? Should not a delivery room nurse be required learn English? While most illegal immigrants are good people, should we not be concerned by importation of violent crime, drugs, and fraud?

We must secure our borders! Minutemen are not vigilantes, but patriots who should be applauded for their efforts to sustain our immigration laws because their government will not. Say not to amnesty! Let us deport as many of these 12 million illegal immigrants as possible. We must punish employers that hire illegal immigrants, especially those that hire cheaper illegals over law abiding citizens. Those who come to this country should learn English and assimilate.

I am not racist. I am simply for legal immigration. My view on illegal immigration is simple: Duh! It isn't legal.

James is from Orem, Utah majoring in Political Science. His favorite book is To Kill a Mockingbird.



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Discussion with Full Disclosure.

BE IN THE KNOW.

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270 HRCB (Kennedy Center)

BYU Political Review meets Tuesdays 6:00 pm
238 HRCB (Kennedy Center)

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