

What's Your Opinion?

Great A-State Political Debate

A-STATE REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS

WITH A FORWARD BY JOHN NORRIS

In mid-January, I asked the A-State College Republicans and Young Democrats to compose a few questions for the other organization to respond to. The following Q&A is the result of their shared efforts.

Democrats' Answers to the Republicans' Questions:

Q: To what extent should marijuana be legalized in Arkansas?

A: Marijuana should be fully legalized in Arkansas. We should expunge the records of everyone who has been arrested for marijuana possession in Arkansas because this is an issue of not only individual liberty, the freedom to do what you want with your own body, but a criminal justice issue. Freeing people and stopping the further incarceration of people who are in jail because of a choice that has affected nobody but themselves, and an economic issue, legalizing it could potentially create billions in tax revenue and it would create agricultural jobs in our state.

Q: Are recent budget surpluses in Arkansas the result of either taxes being too high or the government not provided the promised services to constituents, and how should the surplus be used?

A: There are so many things that could be done with this surplus money -- investing in rural hospitals, highways, our public schools, etc. -- these are just a few of many things that need to be addressed in Arkansas. Sorry if this seems brief, it's just hard to answer the question "how should we spend extra money." It's so broad and expansive and there's so much that needs to be done that it's hard to really get an idea on where to start with that.

Republicans' Answers to the Democrats' Questions:

Q: What is your response to those who question your integrity for supporting a president who has continuously used hate speech when discussing marginalized communities (mocking a

disabled reporter, his spreading of the birther conspiracy, etc.) and has had a history of discriminatory practices in his businesses (violating the Fair Housing Act in the 70s by refusing to rent to African Americans)?

A: As a body, we are not "followers" of President Trump, our party simply voted for him. We do not agree with every action he takes, we plainly agree with his policy positions. There is a disconnect between being a good president and being an angelic individual. It saddens us to think that our integrity may not be determined by our own actions and reduced to who we vote for. We appeal to those who may reduce our integrity to our vote to simply look at who we are and what we do as individuals.

Q: Would you join us in calling for Rick Crawford to hold town halls with constituents regularly and do you agree with his claim that town halls are akin to "lynching"?

A: We wholeheartedly agree that Town Hall meetings are a necessary

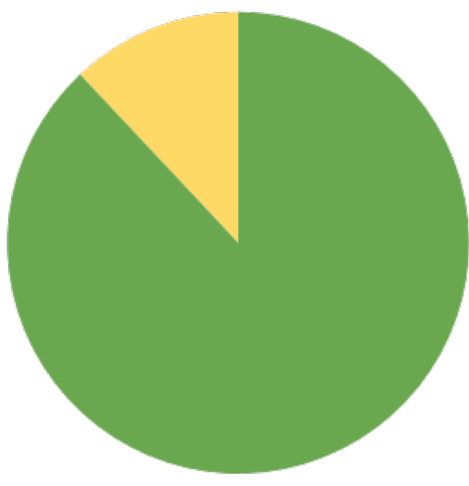
component of local government, allowing constituents to voice opinions and concerns to representatives. As far as the reference to Rep. Crawford calling these meetings "lynchings," this is misrepresented. An article provided to this body by Young Democrats in reference to this question says this, "Crawford told the Jonesboro Sun he believes (the individual and group organizing the meetings) have an agenda, and that showing up to a town hall hosted by them would be similar to Bernie Sanders holding a town hall meeting at the Republican National Convention." With the true context of Rep. Crawford's comments, it is easy to see that "lynchings" refers only to an attempt to entrap him, and not the idea of town hall meetings themselves.

The Opinion Page isn't big enough for the two of them; one of the Democrats' responses and two of the Republicans' responses (as well as their sources and a list of the respondents) will only be in a special unabridged edition of this article on theherald.home.blog!

Last week we asked students whether they could watch movies with subtitles or if subtitles were too distracting.

Out of 25 people who responded, here are the results:

- 22 - Subtitles are good
- 3 - Subtitles are distracting



● Subtitles good ● Subtitles bad

Next Week's Poll:

Nacho Average Poll

The classic argument resurrected: When it comes to Doritos, do you prefer Nacho Cheese or Cool Ranch?

Vote on The Herald's website (theherald.home.blog) to voice your opinion! Polls are also posted on The Herald's Instagram (@astateherald) on Mondays at 4 p.m. Results will be posted in next week's Herald.

These and future articles can be found on the Opinion section of The Herald's website.

Give Me Liberty or Give Me President's Day Off

LILY CABIBI-WILKIN

OPINION EDITOR



Lily Cabibi-Wilkin is a sophomore music composition major from Hot Springs.

The third Monday of every February is Presidents Day, a day which usually sees banks, post offices and government agencies closed. But what's not closed on President's Day? Colleges. While most public schools are closed for the holiday (according to CNN), most colleges (including this one) are still open.

The celebration of Presidents Day appears to be on a state-by-state basis. In Arkansas, the holiday is listed on government websites as "Washington's Birthday," though Arkansas is not one of the states that officially celebrates the holiday. The states that officially celebrate Presidents Day are Alaska,

California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming.

I could not find an explanation online for why Arkansas does not officially celebrate Presidents Day, though the day is also listed as "Daisy Gatson Bates Day." Arkansas State University does not list the day on their academic calendar for 2019-2020, though they did list it as a public holiday in 2019.

So, why do I think we should have Presidents Day off at A-State? Two reasons. First, because we do not have any breaks in the spring between Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Spring Break. Fall Semester 2019 had Labor Day, which happened 14 days into the semester, and Thanksgiving Break, which happened 98 days into the semester. The Fall Semester is 112 days long, not including finals.

Spring Semester, meanwhile, has MLK Day seven days into the semester and Spring Break 70 days into the semester. The Spring Semester is also 112 days long not including finals. While it may seem like Spring Semester gets the better end of the stick, since the Fall Semester breaks happen 84 days apart while the Spring Semester breaks happen 63 days apart, the break between

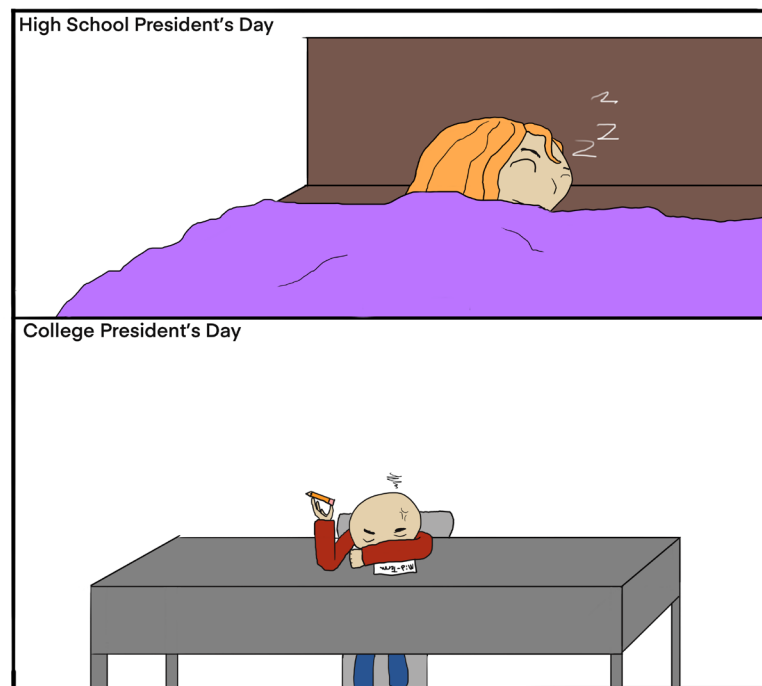
Spring Semester breaks seems longer because MLK Day is so early into the semester.

Second, and more personally, because having an extra break in the middle of the semester would help to avoid burnout in students. In Arkansas, the Spring Semester happens during a time when the weather is mostly grey and wet and cold for a long amount of time, which can contribute to burnout.

According to a study by Helen Jane Orzel of San Jose State University, burnout is "characterized by emotional

exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment." Burnout can be alleviated primarily with sleep, a big plus for three-day weekends, which is what Presidents Day would be if A-State celebrated the holiday.

Do I really just want an extra three-day weekend to sleep? Yes. Absolutely. 100%. But I'm sure that if I polled A-State's student body, many of them would agree with me. Give us the extra break we need to make it through the Spring Semester and make our lives just a little bit easier.



Comic by Jaiden Pense

THE HERALD

MELISSA PALUMBO: EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
melissa.palumbo@smail.astate.edu

TUCKER PHILLIPS: NEWS EDITOR
heraldnews1921@gmail.com

KRISHNAN COLLINS: SPORTS EDITOR
heraldsports1921@gmail.com

LILY CABIBI-WILKIN: OPINION EDITOR
heraldopinion1921@gmail.com

ALEX CLARK: LIFE EDITOR
heraldlife1921@gmail.com

HANNAH RISKER: PHOTO EDITOR
heraldphoto1921@gmail.com

SOOK YOUNG YOO: ONLINE EDITOR
heraldonline1921@gmail.com

SANDRA L. COMBS: ADVISER; ADVERTISEMENT SALES
scombs@astate.edu
astateherald@gmail.com

THE HERALD OFFICE IS IN ROOM 224 OF THE COMMUNICATIONS/EDUCATION BUILDING.

NEWSROOM: 870-972-3076

AD OFFICE: 870-972-2961

FAX: 870-972-3339

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