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**Ad manager:** Danelle Meyer  
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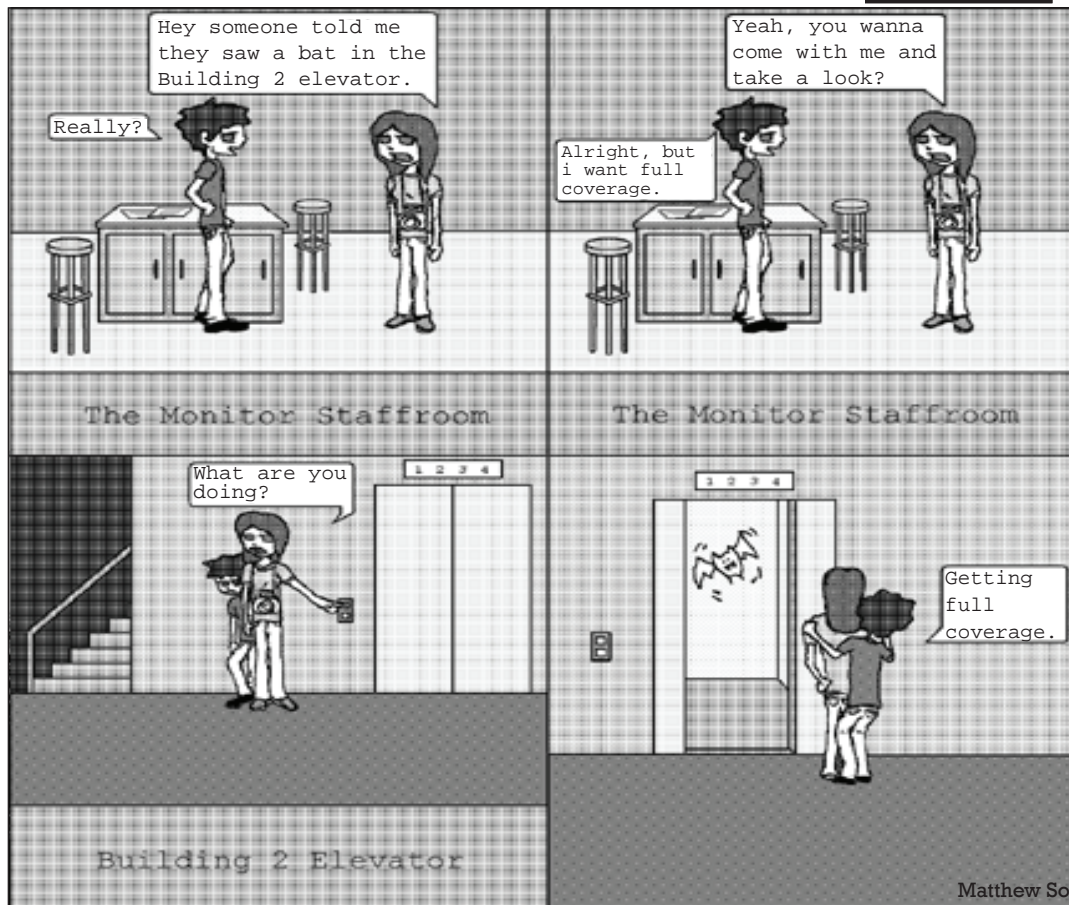


Offices are located in Room 5310 on campus, 43600 Mission Blvd., Fremont 94539-5884. Call (510) 659-6075. Fax: (510) 659-6076. E-mail: monitor@ohlone.cc.ca.us

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OPINION

# Students high on drugs, low on financial aid

By **MATTHEW SO**  
*Opinion editor*

Due to a provision of a little-known federal law, the Higher Education Act (HEA), enacted in 2000, approximately 180,000 students have been revoked the financial aid helping to pay their way through college. In fact, the chief cause for students losing eligibility for financial aid is drug offenses. This is unacceptable.

When convicted of drug possession, abuse, or any other drug charge, students not only suffer the criminal penalties but also lose any financial aid they qualified for. Now, in terms of the welfare of the

convicted person, what good can come of taking away the money they need to pay their way through college? Absolutely nothing. Why should a person's chance at education, therefore shot at life, be stunted by a totally unrelated conflict between federal law and the use of "politically incorrect" drugs? A drug offense does not negate the fact that the person earned, or was eligible for, financial aid.

Drug abuse is a very real and tangible concern, both present and growing in our societies, but complicating the matter to the point of jeopardizing the futures of people obviously inclined toward ensuring better futures for themselves

through education will not resolve the issue. Measures of HEA will merely fill our societies with uneducated, drug-abusing people, as opposed to educated people who may or may not still make drug-usage a personal choice. Because that's what it is - a personal choice, and federal law should not compromise education any more than some personal choices already do. To some extent, a drug-using lifestyle may potentially impede on a student's full capacity in their education, but severing the lifelines of their education, i.e. their financial aid, is making the chance at education little to nil.

In a society where drugs infiltrate

every area where there is a demand, including even high-level security prisons, federal law cannot depend on extremist "crack-down" tactics such as "zero-tolerance" measures and regulations. The country spends an approximated \$60 billion a year in cracking down on drug-infested neighborhoods and law enforcement aimed towards drug users in general. If this staggering annual amount were allocated toward treatment, more rehabilitation clinics and more jobs, our tax money would do more to reduce substance abuse in our society than it is doing now.

The drug market, like any other market, is fueled by supply-demand

economics. The sole drive behind this flourishing market in drugs is the societal demand for them. By throwing drug dealers and users in prison, the supply of drugs may be diminished temporarily, but the demand for drugs will and does continue to grow, and new drug dealers will gladly step in to accommodate it. For the last three decades, the escalating "War on Drugs" has done nothing to lessen the ever-increasing demand for drugs, much less the influx of prosecuted drug-abusers into our prisons.

However, if the government were to legalize drugs and sell them at cheaper prices, they could

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# Upcoming November midterm election

By **MANIKA CASTERLINE**  
*Staff writer*

The issue of national security is one of several key topics in current political debate, especially because of the upcoming midterm election on Nov. 7. The main question of controversy is which political party deserves to direct both foreign as well as domestic policy. Midterm elections are often perceived by

political analysts and strategists to be a referendum on the current administration. For instance, in 1966 Democrats lost 47 House seats and broke even for the Senate seats they gained in 1964. This could be attributed to the shift in public opinion of how President Johnson was handling the war in Vietnam.

The Republican Party believes that the justification for the war in Iraq is where the strength of their party's support lies. According to a White House press release on Aug. 21, President Bush said,

"We're not leaving, so long as I'm the President. That would be a huge mistake. It would send an unbelievably terrible signal to reformers across the region. It would say we've abandoned our desire to change the conditions that create terror. It would give the terrorists a safe haven from which to launch attacks. It would embolden Iran. It would embolden extremists".

Conservatives have redefined terms in order to tilt arguments in their favor. The War in Iraq, in G.O.P terminology, is now a war

on terrorism. And then there are the outright silly characterizations of anti-abortion supporters, like that of being "pro-life." Who, exactly, do you know of that is pro-death? Such labels are as convoluted as the Orwellian phrase "war is peace". In an interview on "This Week," host George Stephanopoulos asked Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA) if he believed if Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) is a radical feminist, to which he replied, "Yes, I do. I mean, read her work and what she's done on children's rights. I mean,

that's radical. I mean, you're talking about giving children the same - that children have rights equal to adults. I mean, that is not a nurturing atmosphere of mothers and fathers taking responsibility for shaping the moral vision of their children. She doesn't agree with that, at least if you look at her earlier writings." Of course, these are blatant examples of the rhetoric that Republicans utilize to depict the comrades who sit across the aisle from them.

The November election is for

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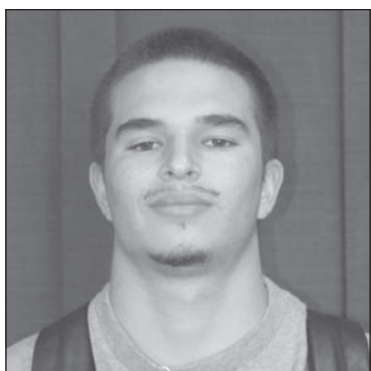
CAMPUS COMMENT >>

## How has 9/11 changed the world?



**DIANNE GO**  
Business

"I think it made people realize how precious the world is."



**ROMAN SCHACHTER**  
Undecided

"It seems like we're more vulnerable to things like terrorism."



**QUAIQUE SARWARY**  
Biology

"People are more judgmental. They're more aware of certain things."



**ZESHAN NUSRAT**  
Biology

"People's mentality toward nationality and religion."



**KESHA HUGHES**  
Biology

"There's a lot more stereotypes now."