

Pork barrel spending is for greater good, but flawed

By NAZIA MASTAN
Staff writer

During President Obama's campaign, he promised to reduce the amount of earmarks, or pork barrel legislation, on the bills that go through Congress. His goal was to make sure that bills pass through Congress "quickly" and that "unnecessary spending" is reduced during his term in office.

But who exactly decides what constitutes unnecessary spending? The American people deserve to be the ones to deem what is frivolous spending and how bailout money will better their communities. We should also be better represented in Congress instead of having our hard

earned money taxed and then given over to big companies like AIG and the Detroit car companies.

Although there is money coming to many Americans directly through the Recovery Program Obama has promoted, it really isn't a lot and in this time of hardship many do not have enough to spare. There is not much extra wiggle room to allow us to give out-of-pocket funding to our communities and programs that are already active, as well as new programs and infrastructure improvements that are needed within our cities.

In my opinion, the American people deserve to see their money come back to benefit their communities and projects that they feel

strongly about. Cancer, diabetes and Parkinson's Disease are just a few of the illnesses that are researched with money given to laboratories through earmarks tacked onto bills. This is done when earmarks are seen as monetary aid that their representatives in Congress are trying to attain so that they may give back to their constituents. It is a part of their duty as legislative representatives to ensure the betterment of our civic projects, and important research that will go on to benefit us in the near future. In addition, earmark spending only constitutes approximately one percent of the Federal Budget.

What I fail understand is how a bill can be approved in a timely

manner by members of Congress without some type of incentive provided to do so, especially when they have to pay a rather unattentive eye to legal detail within the piece, which Congress is forced to do in order for the bill to be passed quickly. Why should they put their signature on a bill without looking into minute details and gaining a comprehensive understanding of it unless they were allowed to "tack-on" personal projects and spending appropriations that they could provide to their constituents?

The Obama Administration has given pork barrel legislation, or earmark spending, a negative connotation. Yes, bridges to nowhere may not be the most sensible build-

ing projects that could be erected from Congressional appropriation, but would we as American citizens really want to halt any form of cancer research? I think not!

In regard to the "Bridge to Nowhere" in Alaska, there are foolish ways that money attained from earmarks is spent; there has to be. But even if we allotted 50 percent of the one percent of the federal budget that is given out to the constituents from the earmarks, that still constitutes only .5 percent of the yearly federal budget going to "foolish spending." Imagine how much the rest of the federal budget goes to things that U.S citizens don't approve of, so why does the earmark have such a bad rap?

A warning for couples taking the 'The Big Leap'

By ISAAC WEST
Staff writer

Is there a "best" age to marry? The answer is different, depending on the couple. In some cultures, children have a future spouse already picked for them at their birth, while in our own western culture, the independent spirit drives us to find our "soulmate," the one and only person right for us.

However, where age is concerned, there doesn't seem to be a "right answer." Some couples, high on the rush of young love, get married hastily, and this can oftentimes lead to domestic problems and divorce.

Couples who delay marriage until later in their youth, however, seem to stand a better chance of sticking together and weathering any problems.

I feel much of the marital strife seen in young couples has much

to do with maturity and careers. If both parties in a young, newlywed couple work part-time jobs, have little past a high school education, and in some cases have unplanned children, these various stressors, combined with the relative immaturity that comes with youth, all play major roles in the outcome of young marriages.

Inversely, it can be noted that many couples that marry later in life stand a better chance of not divorcing and remaining happy. This can be traced to a more well-rounded and complete education, and therefore the partners are more likely to have more stable careers. Their children, if there are any, are more likely to be planned; however, the stress of child-rearing is still present.

In both cases, finances, education and children can all be considered the major mitigating factors. This

does not mean there is anything wrong with getting married early in life, but doing so rashly, and with little forethought, can yield negative consequences.

Newlywed couples that are later in their youth typically have a better chance of staying married if they are well established in their careers, developing stability for their family, both present and future.

Older couples even earn higher wages than young families. According to Loughran & Zissimopoulos' article "Are there Gains to Delaying Marriage," older families have been known to earn roughly "\$8.57 [per hour] compared to \$6.53 [per hour] for [young families] ... [and are] employed in professional occupations and have family income 29 percent higher than [young couples]."

Americans who do marry later in life are also more likely to succeed in

the metro culture, use family planning within the marriage, and have higher educational achievement.

If the couples want a long healthy marriage without the threat of divorce, they should wait until their late twenties to tie the knot. Young couples are two to three times more likely to divorce than those who wait until the later in life. There are several reasons to explain the connection of youth with marital imbalance.

The preparation for marriage for young couples is usually poor. They are not aware of what will be expected of them in the marriage and they do not typically have the maturity to handle their newfound responsibilities. In addition, those who marry earlier in life may have had only limited dating experience and may not have developed a clear idea of what they want in a partner. Plus, couples that marry young

usually have financial difficulties, especially if they have kids early and have limited opportunities for college education.

This shows that people who delay marriage tend to be rewarded with better career paths and higher wages, reducing stress and divorce rates. If young couples truly care for each other, they should consider establishing their own lives first in order to prepare a solid foundation for their later marriage to flourish.

This is not to say, however, that all young married couples are bound for failure while only slightly older couples are headed for success. The truth of the matter is, that to be successful, in all relationships, marriages included, require careful thought, open and honest communication and an eye toward the future. Even when caught up in the passion of love, it is easy to make rash decisions.

End of the semester brings changes, new beginnings

Another semester is coming to its close, and I can't help but feel like this one was particularly different from all the others so far. It seems to be both an end and a beginning, strange labels for something in the middle of my college career.

I realized recently that after this semester, the last of my friends who I knew before Ohlone, who were here before I was, are leaving this semester. I will also no longer be working alongside the people I started out with when I first joined the *Monitor* staff. My



Vaguely necessary
By JAPNEET KAUR
Photo editor

original colleagues have all sort of drifted away, and this semester, the last couple of them will be moving on to bigger and better things (no offense, Ohlone!). However, this is also the semester that my brother will be starting his college career right here at Ohlone.

I watch those around me begin the various new chapters of their lives, both in college and out, and see them as ends or beginnings from my points of view. Where does that leave me, though? Smack dab in the middle of my intended time here at Ohlone College.

In its own way, each new semester is a new beginning. A fresh chance to make what you will of your time and opportunities. Didn't do so great this semester? Try a little harder next time. On the other hand, if you did great this semester, next semester is your chance to prove

that you can keep up the work and continue to do well. Maybe try some new and more challenging things. I plan to do much better and much more than I have my past semesters here.

I continue to see myself in the middle of things, though. In the middle of college, in the middle of so many personal projects, constantly in the middle. The beginning's long gone and the end's nowhere in sight. It's these smaller "beginnings," however, that make things easier. It's refreshing to start a new semester, or be reminded

that the next chapter of your own life is never too far away. Saying goodbye to the friends who helped me get used to college and the colleagues who helped me get settled at the newspaper will be sad, but it's also exciting to see them go on with their lives.

No matter where you're headed, new endeavors can be exciting. I wish all of you the best of luck in what you do. Goodbye to some of my close friends and colleagues, and I'm looking forward to seeing what you make out of your lives and the chances that come your way.

CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

What are your plans for summer vacation?



Ashley Cunha
UNDECIDED
"I'm working all summer, so I won't be able to do anything."



Naveed Safi
BIOLOGY
"Healing my arm so I can start wrestling."



Thomas Matthews
PHYSICS
"I'll be working at a Boy Scout camp."



Janet Aviles
SOCIAL WORK
"Taking classes."



Rhea Flores
HEALTH SCIENCE
"I'm going to Vegas."