

# Opinion

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**THE FIRST AMENDMENT**

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

**TAR HEEL VIEW**  
**On the governor's view of higher education**

From The Daily Reflector of Greenville

It just may be that Gov. Pat McCrory learned a lesson himself recently when he opined large and loud about how a liberal arts education is not all it's cracked up to be. Sometimes a good public thrashing is the best education of all.

The governor, clearly feeling his newly inaugurated oats, got into something of a "bash the ivy-covered walls" talk-fest on national radio with conservative host and former education secretary Bill Bennett, saying among other things how elitists in higher education have created a curriculum that does not lead to jobs — a situation he believes is broken and that he's the man to fix it.

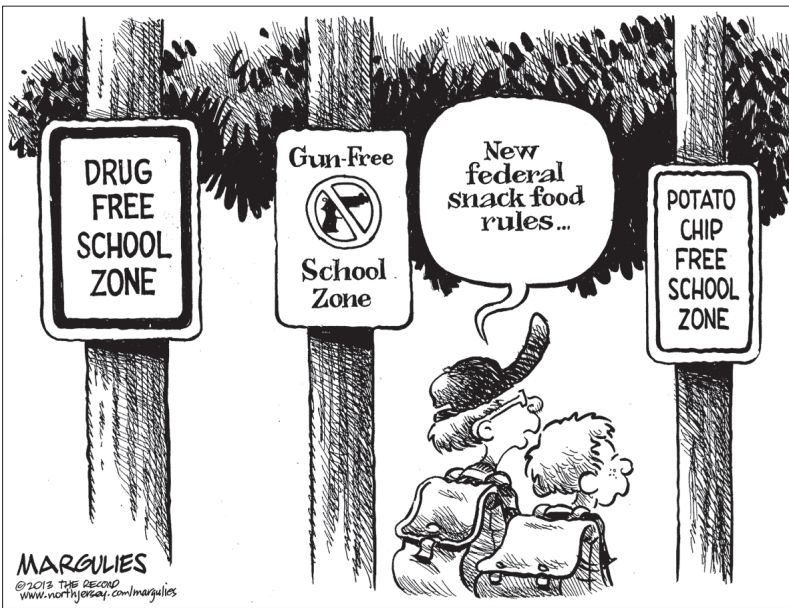
With Bennett facilitating the ranting, the governor said his plan was to change the way the state's university system is funded so that it was geared toward careers more than academics. He went on to say he was having legislation drafted that would award funding to universities and community colleges "not based on butts in seats but on how many of those butts can get jobs."

Well said, indeed, and spoken like a true sophomore — with apologies to real sophomores everywhere — so well-spoken that the quote and others have now made their way far and wide, raising ire and eyebrows and just plain embarrassment across academia and elsewhere.

Obscured behind the hyperbole of McCrory's and Bennett's talk show sound bites is the reasonable notion that higher education cannot ignore the need to help prepare its charges for an ever-toughening workplace. But the brash suggestion that the state should not subsidize the study of certain liberal arts pursuits is much more soap-box bluster than thoughtful policy or even constructive criticism.

University of North Carolina President Tom Ross should be taken at his word when he says the system is committed to developing "the well-educated and skilled talent pool that North Carolina needs to compete and win." This has long been the university's tradition, and with reasonable and measured discourse with the state's leadership, it will continue to adapt to the demands of today's strained job market.

North Carolina, long admired for its system of higher education, expects and deserves far more from its governor than the kind of empty sloganeering heard. It's time for such silly posturing to end and true governing, true leading, to begin. ...



OPINION

## You might be a hypochondriac if ...

The older I get, the more anxious I become about personal illness. When I was in my 20s, I never gave much thought to every odd ache or pain — it was mostly just "a muscular thing." But today when I experience a sudden twinge, I'm sure it's

So, if I may channel Jeff Foxworthy along these lines, you too might be a hypochondriac if ...

- You're afraid to go fishing in case you catch something.
- Every birthday, you treat yourself to a spa, massage, and MRI.
- You continually pester your pharmacist to email you when the FDA approves a home colonoscopy kit.
- On vacations, you check into the hospital before the hotel.
- Your favorite reference website is Wikipedia.
- You plan on attending Hypochondriac Anonymous meetings, but always phone in sick.
- You dread going to the supermarket in case a cashier asks if you're

- ready to check out.
- When offered Tic Tacs, you explain that you can only take two every four hours, after meals, with a glass of water.
- You have more doctors than friends.
- There are some TV shows you can never watch, like "Deadliest Catch."
- You swear you heard the doctor whisper to the nurse "we'll know more after the autopsy."
- Your cell phone plugs into a stethoscope.
- For recreation, you touch up your X-rays with Photoshop.
- Drug dealers regularly visit your home,

- but they're from Pfizer, Merck, or Johnson & Johnson.
- Your favorite bedtime story to read to the kids is "Goldilocks and the Three Bayers."
- You wear a medical gown to bed.
- You live in fear of back injury whenever you jump to conclusions.
- You don't believe laughter is the best medicine; it's morphine.
- You're too scared to use Preparation H because you wonder what was wrong with Preparations A-G.
- You believe you suffer from several previously unknown ailments including: Mississippi

- Ladybug Fever, Fatal Late-night TV Insomnia, Bookworm, Lemon-Lime Diseases, and Irritable Spouse Syndrome.
- You avoid roofers for fear of shingles.
- Each Valentine's Day you send a card to your cardiologist.
- Your family has to eat meals off a physician's examination table in your dining room.
- And, you might just be a hypochondriac, if you ask to be buried with a first aid kit.

Thomas' features and columns have appeared in more than 270 magazines and newspapers, including the Washington Post and Christian Science Monitor. He can be reached at his blog: <http://getnick.blogspot.com>.



Along These Lines  
Nick Thomas

**POLL QUESTION**

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