



HEAD TO HEAD

Rohini Rajgopal (11)

Lisa Du (11)

Should the US follow Spain and regulate advertising for cosmetics on television?

“The U.S. should place restrictions on those commercials. It’s devastating to see the way women are portrayed in these ads: needy, submissive women whose only redeeming quality is their beauty.” - Rajgopal

“A restriction would limit the accessibility of beauty products. A lot of products are good for people to use: skin creams and mineral foundations, for example, all have benefits for healthier skin.” - Du

“The products themselves aren’t the problem. It’s that the product is shown on a model who has been cut out, altered, and distorted, leaving a negative psychological affect on young women.” - Rajgopal

“But the truth is, the skinny model is so prevalent that she doesn’t trigger much of a response anymore. Because of this, we should trust in viewers to decide for themselves.” - Du

“Yet, there are still those who go to extreme measures to achieve a look that was unattainable to begin with. Those people need to be protected from the onslaught of ‘beauty.’” - Rajgopal

“Restrictions could end up backfiring and making no net progress. Just like our immune system: if you aren’t exposed to the problem, you won’t know how to fight back when it hits you.” - Du

Growth clinics give the short a leg up

Justin Cordua
STAFF WRITER

Around the globe, short people struggle to deal with their innate impediment. In some cultures, short people are considered less attractive, less competitive and generally less successful. In South Korea, numerous growth clinics have appeared in several places around the country in response to the desire of parents to have tall, and therefore successful, children. These clinics take short children and put them on machines such as modified treadmills, designed to help make the children taller... like the taffy puller machine at Willy Wonka’s marvelous factory.

In some cases, the children are given hormone shots to stimulate growth. Others receive acupuncture, aromatherapy or tonics containing deer antler, ginseng and other medicinal herbs. Admittedly, these treatments may not be perfectly suited for children.

But let’s face it, short people are a nuisance. From the kid who can’t reach the cookie jar to the adult who has to balance on the tips of his toes just to hug someone, they’re all just not quite normal.

They can’t fox trot successfully with taller people, they’re easily dwarfed when playing ball against the likes of Michael Oher and many short people can’t even change a light bulb without a step ladder.

It’s pathetic. Maybe it’s time to credit the South Koreans in their belief that shortness is a sin, a prejudice fed by high school students like Lee Do-kyong, who went on live television and announced to all of South Korea that she believed all short guys to be losers.

By making short kids taller, these South Koreans aren’t being cruel; they’re helping to abolish a hurtful prejudice.

Think of the child’s battered confidence, of a childhood gone wrong. He is taunted by his peers at school, unable to play school sports because of his small stature, rejected by girls who cringe at the thought of crouching down to kiss him. And where does that leave him?

It leaves him jobless and lonely, because he lacks the confidence to give a good first impression in a job interview or to ask a woman on a date.

This short man, along with millions more, could be helped if our society had the sense to accept a wider range of treatments, despite their unorthodoxy. We laugh at the absurdity of the ancient Egyptians’ belief that bat’s blood could cure blindness. But we are just as blind as those patients of the Egyptian doctors in respect to the problems of short people. We cannot ignore or shun an idea simply because it is unusual.

A good parent is one who makes his ridiculously short child taller. A parent who wants their kid to fit in at school. A parent who wants their child to have a successful future. They know that a tall world is a happy world.

Shortness is an issue that is much larger than the small people it concerns. And it’s not just in South Korea. Shortness is a global disease. Why there aren’t any growth clinics in America yet is beyond me.

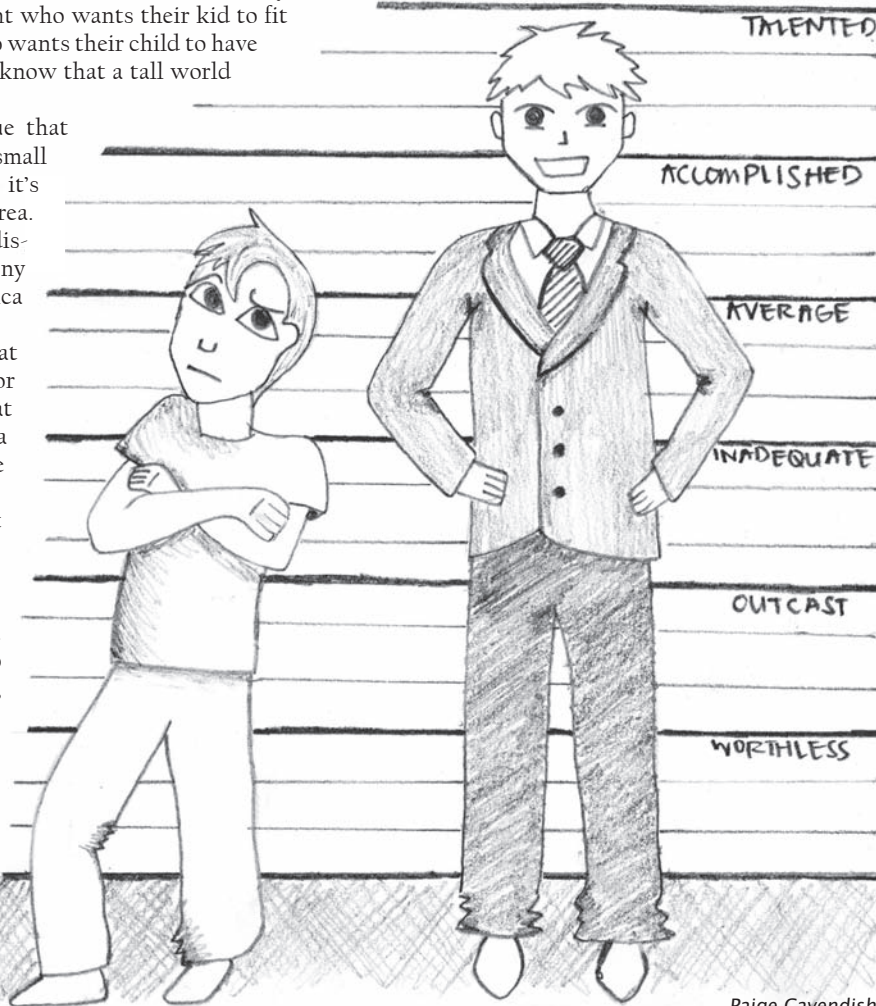
Perhaps the fact that there is no clinical proof or other kind of evidence that these treatments work is a deterrent to many people in America explains this.

But that shouldn’t matter. Such concerns about effectiveness should never stop the pioneering American spirit. We will do anything to give our offspring an edge, whether or not there is official evidence to support it. Just look at all the antacids and ginkgo widely used in society today.

South Koreans are merely taking a page out of America’s book.

Their growth clinics shouldn’t be

cause for alarm. We must embrace them. There comes a point when we must ask ourselves which is worse: using machines and growth hormones to make a child taller, or forcing them to live a life throughout which they will always be considered inadequate.



Paige Cavendish

French proposal unjust towards Muslims

Halie Albertson
STAFF WRITER

France’s motto might translate as “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,” but recent events have proven to stand for anything but.

According to the proposals of a French parliamentary panel, Muslim women wearing face-covering veils could be banned from utilizing public services, such as hospitals, as well as be denied political asylum and French citizenship.

This wrongfully degrades women who choose to wear veils, and is demeaning to the sacred traditions held dear by the five million Muslims who make their homes in France, the largest Muslim community in Western Europe.

The French government must recognize that alienating people based on religious custom and taking away their rights isn’t the answer. Implementing such a law is only asking for trouble.

Faiza Silmi, a Muslim woman living in France, was recently denied French citizenship on the grounds that by wearing a veil, she is an extremist. Contrary to France’s rationale, she only does this to comply with the modesty called for by her religion. The French government denied Silmi’s request for citizenship with claims that she had not properly assimilated into French society, despite the fact that her husband and children are French citizens and that she is fluent in French.

The French claim that they can take such drastic measures because of

the state’s policy of secularism, or the separation of church and state. But using the government to enforce a doctrine of secularism when it comes to what people choose to wear only ostracizes the public.

Another popular claim is that full-body veils make women subservient and limit their personal freedoms. But, for women like Silmi, wearing a veil is a personal choice. No one in France is forcing women to wear veils, unlike in areas such as Afghanistan under Taliban rule until 2001, where a woman could be beaten or killed for not complying with strict dress codes. While drastically different, these two situations bear one extraordinarily unfortunate similarity: women must conform to standards of dressing or face the consequences. For

women like Silmi, this could be as harsh as being denied French citizenship.

It’s a woman’s choice whether or not to wear a veil. In France, the state is making that choice for her. Even more, France’s proposal forces women to choose between religious devotion and access to basic services.

France’s stance towards Muslim women could cause political backlash from countries with Muslim majorities, such as Pakistan, Iran and Egypt. It also sets a precedent that controlling ways of expression, religious or otherwise, is acceptable.

The situation is a thinly disguised, state-sanctioned prejudice towards Muslims. And the proposed law needs to be struck down before Muslims are persecuted even further.

T.V. dramas diminish severity of pregnancy

Joanna Jaroszewska
STAFF WRITER

Reality TV has become a huge part of entertainment in America, but a new aspect of modern life has been greatly altered by TV’s inaccuracies; teen pregnancy. According to USA Today, the teen pregnancy rate in 26 US states has gone up 3 percent; rising for the first time in more than a decade. In 2006, about 40 out of every 1,000 women gave birth before the age of 19.

But all things considered, this is not surprising, especially with newly popular T.V. shows, such as *16 and Pregnant*, *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* and *Teen Mom*, on the rise. Research by the RAND Corporation shows that the amount of sexually centered TV programs directly correlates with teen pregnancy rates. And with the average American teenager watching more than three hours of TV daily, the newest episode of *Teen Mom* has great potential to affect the attitudes of teenage viewers towards the ethical side of teen pregnancy. These reality TV shows and dramas have made viewers comfortable with the idea of teen pregnancy as something that is easily managed.

These new shows, however entertaining, have become the leaders in mis-

leading reality TV. They present young viewers with teenage girls who sob over trivial things while their real problems are buried under a vast array of squabbles with boyfriends, best friends and parents. These shows portray the teen moms living casual lifestyles, some even remaining in school. Amy Juergens, from *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* finds the time to go on dates after having a baby; Catelynn in *Teen Mom* has a supporting boyfriend right by her side every step of the way. Whether through adoption or parental assistance, the girls on reality TV have the support many teenagers lack in real life.

In the first episode of *16 and Pregnant* Maci, one of the main characters, enjoys fancy restaurant dinners with her friends, receives an abundance of presents at her baby shower, and even owns an apartment with her fiancé. This case presented by MTV, once again, doesn’t depict the true reality of being a teen mom.

According to Planned Parenthood, about 80 percent of teen mothers require public assistance in various forms, such as food stamps, housing assistance and many forms of financial aid. Presenting so-called “reality” TV shows with teens living comfortably either in their own homes or with parents is just one way

MTV has created a false image of what teen parenting is really like. Girls like Farrah on *Teen Mom* often have patient, well-to-do parents willing to allow them to stay at home and continue going to school.

However, teenage pregnancy doesn’t cause short-term effects on just the mother. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that 78 percent of children born to teen moms who never graduated from high school will go on to live in poverty. So whether their parents are there to hold their hands or not, the girls on TV will eventually have to deal with the future of their children.

Ignoring these crucial dilemmas of teen parenting and casting aside all aspects of responsibility, reality TV skews our perception of how difficult the task really is. The glamorization and distortion in these shows practically promotes teen pregnancy.

Unfortunately, that’s exactly what we want to see. We love to hear the heart-warming music at the end of each episode. We want to see the bad boyfriend leave as the new boyfriend comes in and helps take care of the baby. With this insatiable desire for happy endings, our “reality” TV shows will continue serving us what is straying farther and farther from reality.

By the Numbers

- US teen pregnancy rates have gone up 3% for the first time in more than a decade
- New Mexico is ranked highest among the 50 states with 93 out every 1,000 girls aged 15-19 becoming pregnant
- California comes in 15th place in the U.S., with 75 teen pregnancies in every 1,000 girls aged 15-19
- Teen pregnancies cost the U.S. a total of 9.1 billion dollars in 2004

Sidebar by Joanna Jaroszewska
Source: thenationalcampaign.org

Spending freeze forces U.S. to own up to piles of debt

Halie Albertson
STAFF WRITER

The recession has put more Americans in debt than ever, Uncle Sam included.

The national public debt is at \$12 trillion, and is growing by the second. Not only is this irresponsible, but it sets a bad example for Americans and corporations. If the U.S. government, made up of economists and financial analysts, can’t even dig itself out of piles of debt, how can the average American?

Fortunately, President Obama is trying to do something to turn this trend around.

During his State of the Union address, Obama proposed a spending freeze for three years, starting in 2011. Budgets related to national security, such as the Pentagon budget, will not be affected. In addition, programs that citizens count on, such as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, will also be exempted from the freeze.

As it is, the bureaucracy is inefficient and wastes money. While some large programs will continue to need government funding, many programs can be completely cut or at least scaled back.

In a time of economic uncertainty, Obama should be applauded for his efforts to take control of our nation’s budget crisis.

In comparison to the entire national debt, the savings would be minimal at \$250 billion over the next 10 years. Still, it’s a step in the right direction. It sends the message that the U.S. is willing to make a change and take responsibility for its finances. At the same time, better credit will give the U.S. an advantage in that our interest rates will eventually go down, and we’ll lessen our dependence on loans from other countries. According to the U.S. Treasury, in 2006, 44 percent of federal debt was held by citizens and institutions in other countries.

Opponents argue that the spending freeze is not effective enough. One way to do this, critics claim, is to start the freeze immediately and not wait for another year. But that isn’t the right way to go about it.

Although our economy is in a much better state now than it was a few years ago, it’s still fragile and economists predict it would be wiser to start cutting costs a year from now.

On the other hand, some say that the cuts wouldn’t make a big enough impact. But many programs, such as education, depend on federal funding. And cutting funding during wartime isn’t the answer, either.

Meanwhile, while there are still problems and challenges associated with cutting back—invariably some inefficient programs will need to be downsized or disappear completely—Obama is taking the first step towards bouncing back. And that is what will truly benefit our country.

My Little Rintrah by Eileen Shi

