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Senate speaks for students

Mark Hopkins

University of Maine

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Senate speaks for students

To the editor:

Much comment and criticism has arisen in the past few weeks concerning the responsibilities of the Student Senate in representing the opinions of the student body.

Well, the Senate decides on many things over the semester. Putting the resolution endorsing impeachment aside, a demand for a referendum on virtually any business before the Senate would have been met with cries of derision and labeled a "cop out." So what makes the resolution supporting the impeachment of the President so special? Which would have more impact, be more effective and benefit more people: allocating funds to Abenaki or voting on impeachment? Recognizing a gay group or taking a political stand?

In such a emotionally charged issue is it possible for a student senator to objectively assess the general opinion in his constituency? I believe, and am supported by research and just plain observation, that a person tends to find what he is looking for. In other words, the individual's own opinions may block out and distort contrary information. No, I'm not accusing anyone of purposely distorting the facts; this bias is unavoidable despite the best of intentions.

Then, on second thought, perhaps a general referendum might be more reliable? Well,

the referendum had only 830 responses; only 10.6 per cent of the undergraduate population. Considering that, for a multitude of reasons, people who favor impeachment might be more motivated, then how valid is this referendum? What do all the people who didn't vote support?

Now we're in a fine pickle. Due to apathy, a referendum is questionable and the senate is suffering pangs of incompetence and guilt. Or are we?

I like to think of myself as an intelligent, rational being despite evidence to the contrary. Am I and my fellow senators really unrepresentative of our constituencies? Are we merely prancing around like silly dillydums, our thoughts falling like leaden farts upon the floor?

I think not. The purpose of a government is to do for its people what they cannot do for themselves and one of these supporting functions is a reflection and vocalization of the consensus of opinion.

As long as the student senators act in the interest of those who elected them and not for themselves we will have a claim of legitimacy in representing student opinion. It is when they start preening themselves in front of the mirror that we are in trouble.

Mark Hopkins
Oak Hall