Dear Observer Editors:

We at Safe Schools Coalition would like to thank you for your responsiveness to the community's concerns over the recently printed comic in the Observer which promoted violence towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community printed on January 13, 2010. The Safe Schools Coalition rejects the idea that the cartoon was taken out of context or that it was somehow harmless in its description or impact to the LGBTQ community. We support you in looking at ways to make Notre Dame a welcoming and safe environment for all students and their families. Safe Schools believes that all students, faculty and their families should have a safe environment to learn, teach and live regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

The Safe Schools Coalition encourages the Observer to continue to challenge divisive behavior in all of its forms. The Observer standing united with the community's petition to have “sexual orientation” added to the University's non-discrimination clause would be a step in the right direction. Listing sexual minorities as protected sends a clear message to all students, faculty and their families that they are important. LGBTQ concerns are currently not listed alongside "race/ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status or age" in the University’s non-discrimination clause. We support and appreciate your attempts to set right the error of running the comic. Yet we think that there is and has been much need for an active effort to support LGBTQ folks at the University.

If Safe Schools Coalition could assist you in finding your message or in advocacy please let us know. Not only are we watching the developments of these events but we also are dedicated to the success of an inclusive campaign.

Sincerely,

Frank Couch
Safe Schools Coalition Intervention Specialist.