

It's time to reform the immigration system

President Bush wants to do something about the immigration system, which is not working. The president is ready to propose a "guest worker" program to allow hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals to work and live legally in this country.

It has to happen. The present system is way beyond repair, and we need to start over if we want this country to prosper. Our economy can't grow without foreign workers.

Since the 1960s, U.S. immigration policy has granted the right to come here only to skilled workers, professionals such as doctors and technicians, those who were deemed worthy of allowing in.

Basically, we tried to shut our doors to foreign laborers, but it has not worked. The problem is economic: There are thousands of workers who want to come to this country because there are thousands of jobs here for them.

It's impossible, given the situation, to keep them out. No amount of money spent on border enforcement seems to work. And as long as the jobs and the money are here, people will find a way to come.

By the turn of the century, in fact, one in seven workers in this country was an alien. In "entry-level" jobs, the ones that pay the least and are hardest to fill, the figure was more like one in five.

Immigrants take jobs on road crews, in packing plants, in fields, in factories, that most Americans won't consider. But to keep the economy rolling, someone has to do the work.

All the present system has done is force the immigrant labor pool underground, where the workers don't pay taxes, buy insurance for their cars, or contribute to our society. Though most would gladly pay their share, we won't let them.

Worse yet, the undocumented labor pool creates a vast underground of illegals, a shadowy world where terrorists might be able to move at will. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge has said as much. He's among those in the administration pushing for reform.

Allowing guest workers to be legal has many advantages. One proposal is to let them collect Social Security, but only if they return to their own country. Legal workers would be able to get driver's licenses and have car insurance. As it stands today, most states won't let illegals be licensed. They are forced to drive without a license or insurance.

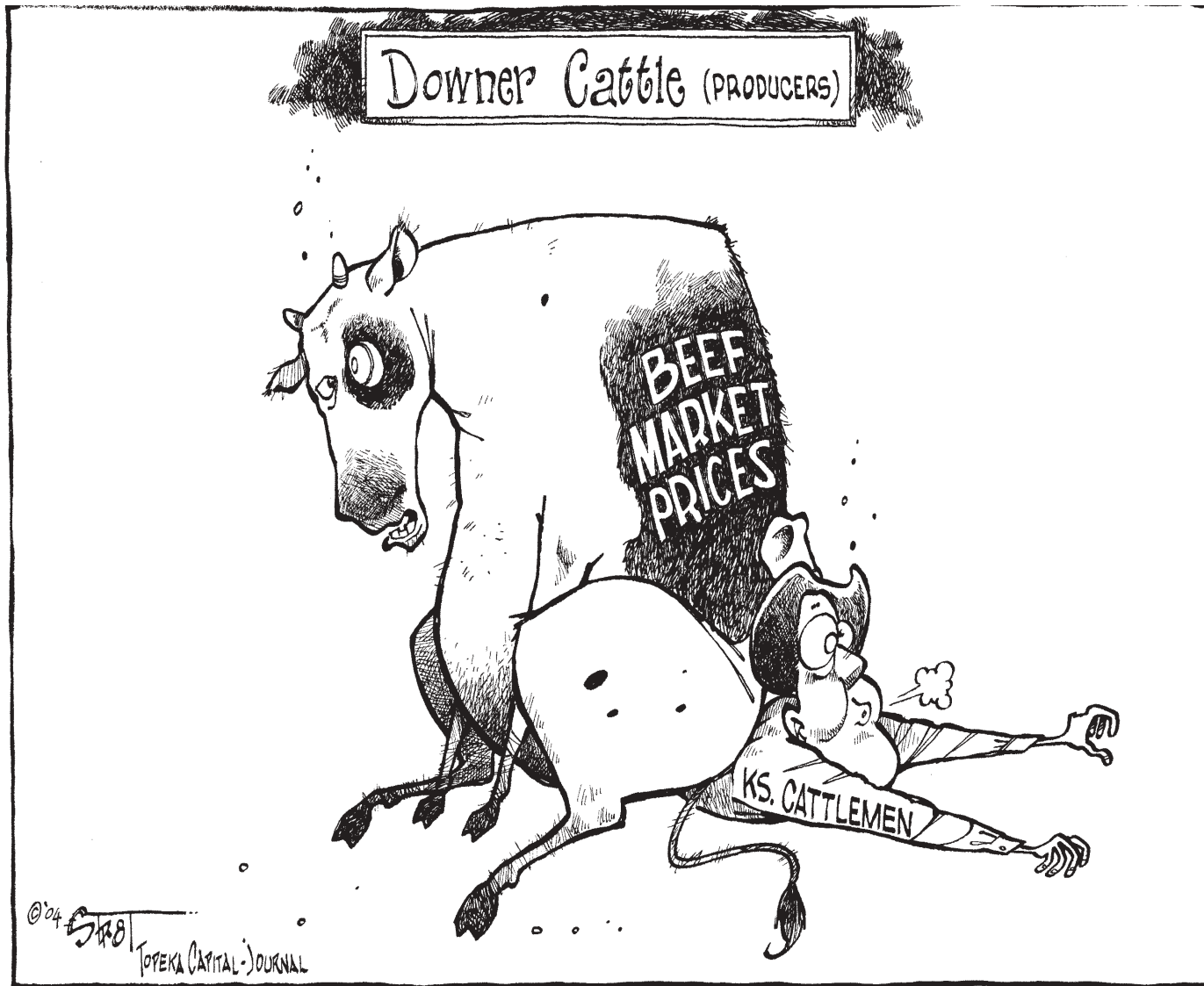
Legal immigrants will be "on the radar screen" for police and security officials, and that will make Ridge feel better.

Experts predict that reforms may take years to get through Congress, though. The issue is considered "radioactive" on Capitol Hill because of the high emotion it generates.

Some proposals, such as a plan to have a commission to regulate where workers could go and what jobs they could take, will drop away. The old policy shows the utter failure of attempts to regulate workers. It will take time to hash these things out.

But the current situation is intolerable, and the sooner we set about making it work, the better.

— Steve Haynes



Small towns are nothing to snub

The saying is "bigger is better", but I beg to differ. Many people believe we live in small towns not out of choice, but because we have no options. I've lived in Reno, Nev., a short time in Sacramento, Calif., just outside of Las Vegas, Portland and Birmingham for over 30 years. Although they each offered wonderful things, so does Norton.

The beauty is each place offers a different way of life and I am grateful for what Norton offers to my family.

How blessed we are to have a hospital and doctors that personally care about us, know us and deeply feel for us.

Whenever I hear someone complain about something that has happened and insinuate this wouldn't happen with a big city hospital or doctors, I want to remind them that chances are they wouldn't even hear about their doctor/hospital in the city, let alone know about another person's care.

For that matter they probably couldn't even get in to see the doctor. The greatest shock to me came late one night about two months after we moved back.

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



My mother became ill in the night, I called and took her to the hospital where the doctor met us and within 20 minutes she had been admitted, placed in a room and started treatment and we were headed home.

I said to my husband, Jack, we wouldn't have even arrived at the hospital in that length of time in the city, let alone been seen.

And then there is the issue of safety. Of course, we all know it only takes one culprit, but crime is less in a small town for one big reason. Everyone watches out for each other, and we notice people, because they are our neighbors.

A nephew's wife noted their children received a private school education with-

out the tuition payment, i.e. small classes and caring teachers.

The tremendous volunteer efforts from firefighters to CARE services to the county fair and the theater, we have so much to be proud of and much for which to be grateful.

This is the only place we have lived where Meals on Wheels is delivered seven days a week as well as holidays. I always wondered if they thought people in the city didn't get hungry on those days.

But best of all, is the feeling you get in Norton. When you walk down the street and people smile and ask about your family. Or the wave we all joke about, but feel a great sense of acceptance when we're on the receiving end.

A place where children play out until the streetlights come on or the neighbors' kids (whom you actually know) have to go in.

A place where you feel safe having your child walk to town or go to the movie with friends.

A place we gladly and out of choice call home.

When the husband is away....

I won't say I was envious. That sounds so petty. Petty, yes. True, absolutely. Back in August, Steve got an invite to go with a group of publishers to Tunisia.

The man organizing the trip is from Iowa, but he knows a man in Washington who works for several small Arab countries. These places would like to see more American tourist dollars flowing into their small corners of the world and, oh yes, if we could influence the State Department, that would be nice, too.

The man from Iowa pointed out that since Tunisia is a Moslem country, he was only inviting male publishers.

Steve was hesitant, but I told him he would be crazy to turn down the invitation.

The last bunch of Americans to get a free trip to Tunisia found themselves fighting the Germans outside Tunis, the capital city.

The tour was supposed to take place around Thanksgiving, but the contact said

Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



that timing wasn't a strong point on these trips.

Thanksgiving came and went, and there was no call. Then around Christmas, the call came. The trip was on. Could Steve leave on Jan. 10 from Washington or New York?

Sure, but which?

Several e-mails and phone calls later, it was decided that the jumping-off point was Washington. The journalists would be flying Air France and, oh yes, the publisher from Iowa was taking his wife.

Now, I like these folks, and he was doing a lot of work to set this whole thing up.

I had no reason to complain or bemoan. He was giving Steve a golden opportunity.

But I was so jealous I couldn't sleep for two nights. I made Steve's life miserable for about a week. Then I mostly got over it.

I put Steve on the plane in Denver that would take him to Washington and returned home. After all, I had a lot to do and now I had no man under my feet to get in my way.

Of course, there was no man to feed the dog, do the laundry or help with all those hundreds of other chores that Steve does every week. I was busy. Very busy.

I also took a day off to visit my mother in Concordia. Mom confided that she had had the 24-hour stomach bug the day before.

The next day, I realized that I had brought Mom's bug home with me.

Now, that's just not fair. Steve goes traveling and I get Montezuma's revenge. If I weren't so miserable, I'd get him.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

To the Editor:

As we begin this legislative session, I want to take a moment to let you know how much I value your commitment to informing your readers about what is happening in State government.

I very much respect your opinion and the impact your views and your newspaper have on the men and women of our community.

I am sending this letter in part to thank you for your on-going efforts as leaders of knowledge and information in Kansas. I also believe it is beneficial for you to have the information I covered in my State of the State address, details on the budget, and my education plan at your fingertips. In my continuing strides to operate more efficiently and effectively, (\$85 million

in savings and changes in the way we operate so far!) I am not sending you a lot of paper. Instead, I ask that you access the information on-line, at www.ksgovernor.org or www.accesskansas.com. I hope that it will be convenient for you to review the numbers and what I am proposing electronically.

Should you need assistance or more information anytime during the year, please call Nicole Corcoran in my Communications Office, (785-368-8500). She is always happy to help answer questions, find information you may need, or help get you in touch with me.

I look forward to a year of continued cooperation with the Kansas Legislature and hope to have many positive accomplishments to talk with you about in the

future.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sebelius
Governor of the State of Kansas

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality.