

What is the real reason for social services consolidation?

The Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services is smiling and saying nice things while driving a knife into the back of the citizens of Norton County.

A couple of years ago, the department decided to consolidate offices. Consolidate — that's a bureaucratic word for close, shut down, leave town.

Bigwigs from the department went around to small Kansas towns and told them that their social services offices would be closing and the people who worked there could move to another town, find another job or start driving anywhere from an hour to several hours a day.

Folks in Norton, Oberlin, Hill City, Smith Center and dozens of others were told that the state was interested in their welfare so much that they were being abandoned.

At first, the department said that it was closing the offices because of money.

Everyone knew that the state was broke. Every department was being cut back, and this was how Social Services was doing its part.

But then people started asking questions.

Questions like, "How can you save money if you're going to keep the same number of employees?"

Then the tune changed to, "We need to be able to manage our people better and we can do a better job of that if they are all together."

Translation — Our bureaucracy isn't tight enough. We want to be able to look over the shoulders of every employee and make sure they are toeing the department line.

So over the past couple of years, social service offices have closed across the state. Only in small towns. Only the places that can least afford to lose state jobs.

Now it's Norton's turn.

Elsewhere in the paper, you'll see a story about why Norton's Social Services office will close: Because several years ago the state needed money, and the department saw that as an excuse to make unpopular changes in the name of saving money. Now it has all its workers under one thumb.

What is not said is that the department has since spent thousands to move into new "service centers" in Colby and Phillipsburg to house all the workers they have taken from the small towns.

These are lies, damn lies and statistics. The Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services is feeding us statistics, but the agenda goes way beyond that.

— Cynthia Haynes

Congressman sponsors legislation to increase benefits

Congressman Jerry Moran has sponsored legislation that will increase the financial assistance paid to the families of soldiers killed while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When a service member is killed in the line of duty, their family receives \$12,420 for assistance. Mr. Moran's legislation increases this benefit to \$100,000 and is retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001.

"You can never put a price on the lives of those who die in the service of their country," Congressman Moran said. "However, this legislation will help better express our nation's gratitude to the soldiers and the families for paying the ultimate price in defending our freedom. It is my hope that the House and Senate will take quick action on this legislation to honor the survivors of our fallen soldiers by ensuring their financial stability."

The Military Death Benefit Improvement Act, H.R. 292, would increase the one-time, tax-free, death gratuity payment to survivors of service members

Capitol Views

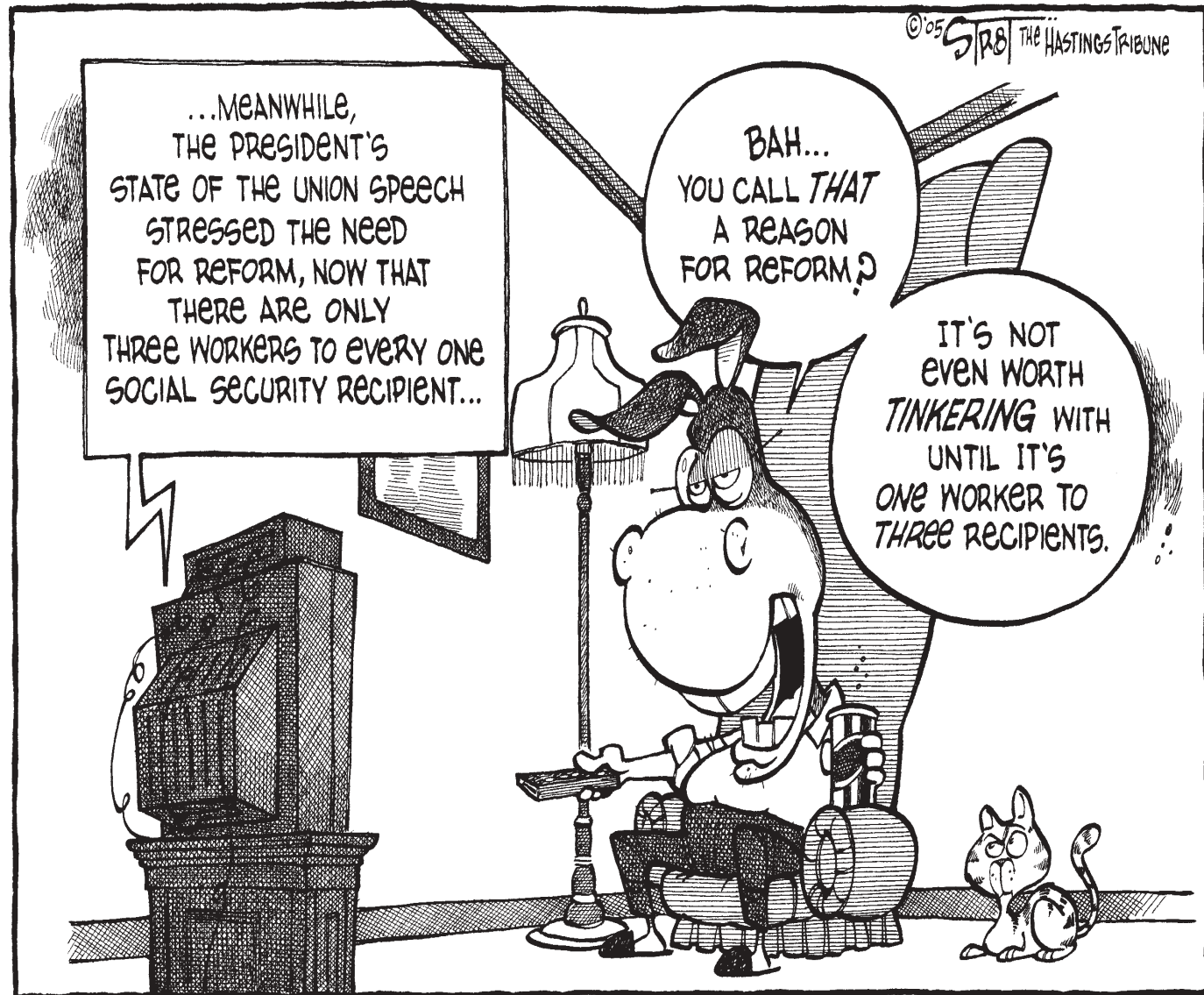
Rep. Jerry Moran



killed in the line of duty. Efforts to increase death payments have received strong bipartisan support and will likely be included in President Bush's 2006 budget.

"I have visited our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and can tell you that they are truly our nation's heroes," Mr. Moran said. "Increasing this assistance is not about money, but about preserving the memory of these heroes and providing for their families."

For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at www.house.gov/moranks01/.



Hidden deep inside is a shoe fetish

Let's be honest — to some extent, every woman has a shoe fetish. My niece Alison was featured in Kansas State University's yearbook the "Royal Purple" with a story about her shoe collection a few years back.

The eldest daughter had really weeded hers down. (Being unemployed and in school for six years can hamper one's ability to support one's habit.) But I noticed a lot of Payless boxes the last time I visited her.

I asked the obvious question, "Do they have a Payless store in town?"

"They have two," she gleefully replied.

I must be getting old because while I still admire the cute shoes the young gals wear I have given up on buying shoes for myself.

I need a wide width — hard to find. My knees hurt and I think I am going to fall over when I wear heels. When I was young I could stand a blister or two for the sake of fashion but no more.

Alison is getting married soon. So the daughters and I are all trying to find not only the right shoes but also the right dresses. Kate is taken care of — she is in the wedding party.

I ordered dresses for Patricia and Elizabeth. Patricia liked her dress — the skirt was all flowing — just what you would

Back Home Nancy Hagman



want, but the top looked "funny." Elizabeth liked her dress in the catalog. But she also says it looks "funny" on her. I'm a little confused. I didn't order from Clowns 'R Us.

Now Elizabeth would like to be a shoe collector but it is hard to find the cool styles in size 11. She loves to wear high heels but wants her boyfriends to be taller than she is. I suppose that's why at 5 foot 10 inches her social life mostly involves watching old movies in her apartment in fuzzy slippers!

Patricia's shoe collection has probably surpassed Alison's and she also has a perfectly fine dress for the wedding in her closet. She made it for 4-H two years ago. But we never found the right shoes. When she modeled it in competition she borrowed some shoes. She could have conveniently forgotten to give them back but they were a tad small. So she did and

never wore the dress!

We searched for a pair identical to those she borrowed but they were a season old so we couldn't find them. The shoes need to be ivory, not cream, not vanilla, not beige.

"Can't you wear black shoes," I asked. She agreed she could but proceeded to tell me she has no closed toe black shoes. While I understand the difference between ivory and cream I had a hard time swallowing that.

Turns out she does have black closed toe shoes but they are loafers, boots, etc. (I have often wondered if God was trying to be "funny" when he blessed me with 3 daughters all of who wear different sizes of shoes!)

I ordered her black shoes. They were no longer available.

I finally found ivory shoes and ordered them. They had tapered toes. I did not realize that was code for witches' shoes. They looked ridiculous. I measured them against a pair she had left in the closet. They were two and a half inches longer.

Here's a news flash for shoe designers — women don't want their feet to look big. And we don't want to look like the wicked witch from the Wizard of Oz.

However, like Dorothy, we do know, "The right shoe changes everything!"

A mother's decisions help in the end

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



This last move, we are convinced, gave her a greater quality and quantity of life to the end.

My point is this; our actions impact those around us.

As parents we want the best for our chil-

dren. As children, we want the best for our parents, but it is not a natural role to parent your parent.

Oftentimes, age is seen as a reason for a child to involve him or herself in this role reversal. Oftentimes children determine what is best for their parents out of convenience for themselves and unfortunately there are those times when the need is there for a child to step in and make the decisions.

What a great gift a parent gives us, when they are able to think through their actions, make their own decisions and rejoice not just in their decision, but in their ability to do so.

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.

★ Governor Kathleen Sebelius, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-2332

★ U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

★ U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715

★ State Sen. Ralph Ostmyer, State Capitol Building, Room 128-S, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

★ State Rep. John Faber, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500