

Not raising taxes is the only way to limit growth

Bleeding-heart writers in Topeka like to cast it as a good-versus-evil sort of thing.

You might, too.

The miserly Legislature has refused to raise taxes, they say, and state services will suffer.

As far as it goes, that's true.

The Legislature, controlled by conservatives appalled by the growth of state government, has said "enough."

It's refused to raise taxes, forcing us to take stock and decide what's important.

The facts are appalling.

In the last 40 years, the state budget has grown from \$527,000 million to \$11.8 billion. Even when you take inflation into account, the growth is more than quadruple.

That's a lot of government, a lot more than many Kansans want or need.

And by forcing us to evaluate state spending and set some priorities, the Legislature is doing us a real favor.

Taxes are high enough. Some would say they're still too high, despite cuts in the Bill Graves era. But they are unlikely to go up, not in this Legislature.

And that is not a bad thing.

Taxes are little more than a legalized way of stealing. They're not charity and they're not voluntary. It's important that they be spent only for vital public causes.

When a state's spending quadruples in four decades, someone should be asking where the money went. State programs have multiplied. They live forever, feeding on the built-in lobby created by those who benefit from the program — the employees and the clients.

The only way to stop this is to limit tax growth, and the Legislature sees that.

At this point, no one is talking about cutting state spending, mind you. Just limiting growth. That alone is difficult as heck.

But in electing this Legislature, that's clearly what the people of Kansas asked for. Priorities.

Schools remain No. 1.

Roads and colleges are close behind.

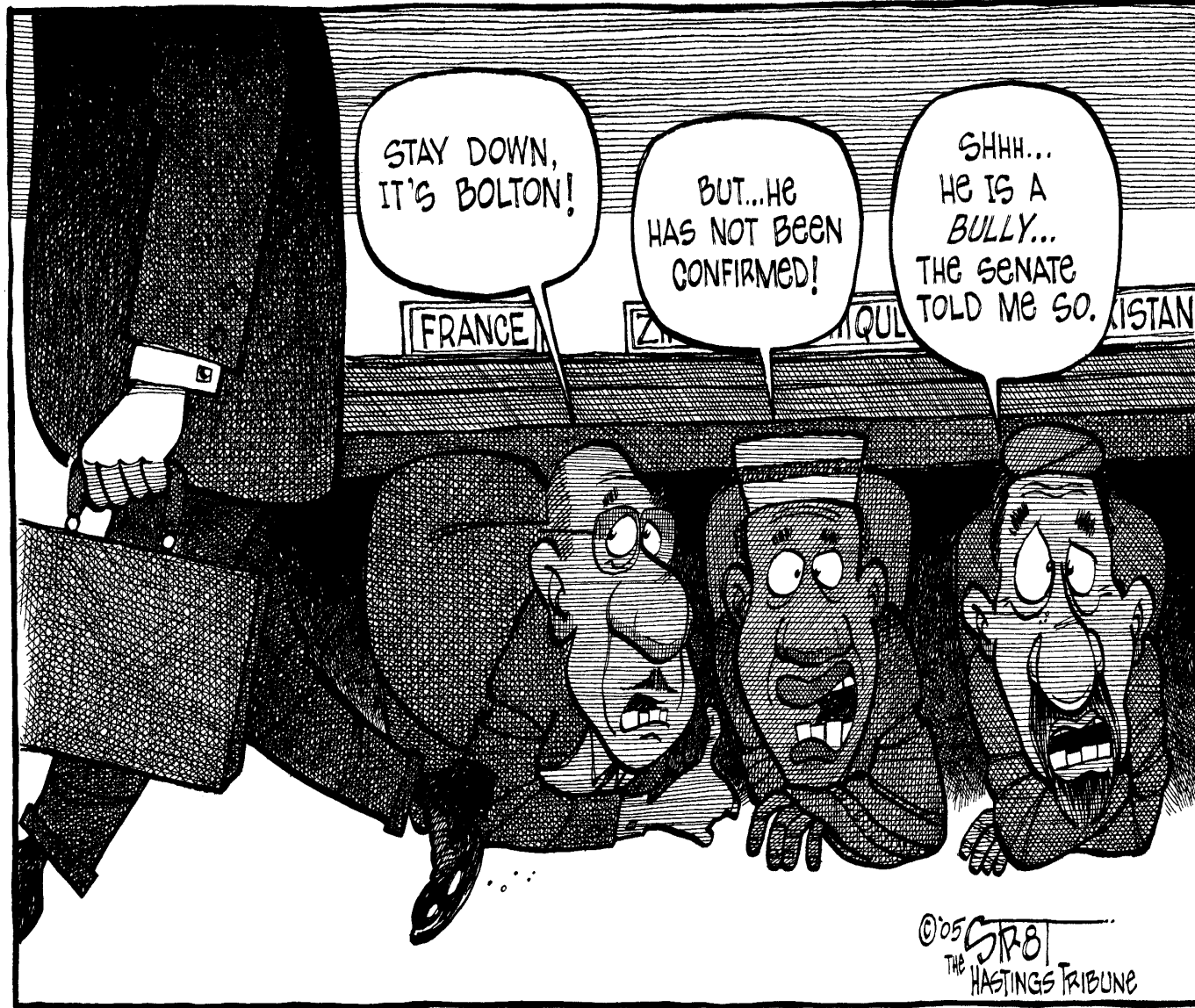
Welfare has ever-increasing demands, but must be limited.

Cities and counties won't get any more "revenue sharing" from the state.

And the rest of the government will have to settle for the crumbs.

And none of that is all bad, at least not if you're a taxpayer.

— Steve Haynes



How many 'there yet's' does it take...

Are we there yet? How many more minutes till we get there? G'ma, what's a horizon? Are we there yet? Is Pa-Pa going to be awake when we get there? How long do I get to stay? Are we there yet? I remember my Spanish, wanta hear? Can we eat at McDonald's? Are we there yet?"

You get the idea. That was part of the nonstop chatter driving back from Dallas with my 6-year-old granddaughter Taylor. She's a good little traveler, though, and doesn't complain, except for the time it takes to get to our house.

In years past, her mother and I would meet halfway and spend the night at a motel with a pool. We would make "the trade" and each return home. That would split the trip up and not make such a big day either way.

This year, I drove all the way to Texas to be with Kara during her surgery (everything went fine) and brought "Tay" home with me for three weeks. She's just in time

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



for Vacation Bible School, an antique engine show or two, wiener roasts with her cousin Alex, work with me, a few piano lessons and whatever else we can find to do. I know the time always goes too fast.

I warned her parents that in a few years when I retire, I'd like her to come for the summer. Thought I better give them a little while to get used to the idea. Both of my girls and lots of my nephews spent entire summers at the farm. I think it was good for them.

—ob—

Last week, I took cut flowers into the

office almost every day. That's the only way I was going to get to enjoy them. I'm afraid everything will be gone by Memorial Day.

Speaking of which, this is my 40th alumni year. Rose (Pachner) Riffle has taken on the lion's share of the organizing of our class get-together, but I get to help decorate our class window on Main Street. Perfect timing, because when I was cleaning out that closet last week, I found lots of pictures and newspaper clippings. My, how young we looked. We thought we knew it all, though.

—ob—

My friend Sonia sent me a graduation picture of her youngest daughter, Amy. I remember visiting in the hospital the day she was born. Sonia said Amy doesn't know yet what kind of a career she wants. I gave her the same advice my mom always gave new graduates: "Your first year of college is more about figuring out what you don't want to do."

A spotless home isn't a lived in home

So what kind of housekeeper are you? My dad used to say, "Some people have a house to live in and some people have a house to keep."

He was comparing my sister and I.

He meant it as a compliment to me that my house was the one that was lived in. And, I always took it as such. I am not compulsive, but I do like things to be tidy.

It is difficult to keep a real neat house with kids.

The best system I ever used was put the things they left laying around away and then give them a certain allowance — maybe a dollar at that time, and charge them a dime for each item they decided they had to have back.

They started picking up real quick. Also it helped me know which stuff was important (the things they would pay for) and which stuff was not. We could get rid of it.

My sister-in-law decided a few years ago that she would hire someone to clean her house. After awhile her son, who was in his early teens at the time, told her if she decided she could not afford the extra help he would get a job to pay for it because she was so much easier to live with when the house was clean.

My sister, who has a house to keep, mostly keeps her house herself.

We did find out a little secret when Kate graduated from high school. Rachel bought her an iron. I thought that was a great gift. Kate liked it, too. But Rachel's daughter was really distressed about it. She seemed to think her mom had committed a major gaffe.

Finally, she explained, "Why would anyone need an iron, I mean, we like pay someone to do our ironing." She followed Kate to the same school a couple of years later. We always told Kate if she ran out of money she could always do her cousin's ironing.

One nice thing about our house is we have a front room. It is almost always neat and clean.

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



Of course, most of time everyone ends up in the back of the house, but if you only get inside the front door you would think I was a great housekeeper.

The bad thing about the front room is it is really wasted space. We use it two or three times a year.

I wish we had used it more. Why are we so busy? Remember when we used to go visiting on Sundays? I have resolved that after we move we are going to have people over more — just to visit.

Don't come by now though. Both

houses are a mess. Or maybe I should encourage everyone to come over.

Last summer we were looking for a refrigerator for Elizabeth. We went to look at one at a moving sale. We decided it would not work but before we left, the woman looked over the pile of things to sell and gave Elizabeth a tabletop lazy Susan.

"Everyone who comes to my house has to take something, if you won't pay for it, I'll give it away," she explained.

She was a hoot. And, it was a nice welcome for Elizabeth.

I'm packing and understand where she was coming from. A moving sale is a possibility but it would be much more fun it would be if everyone just came over for something free.

Maybe you need a goldfish bowl, or curtain rods, or better yet, a good old-fashioned visit.

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.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

★ Governor Kathleen Sebelius, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232

★ 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, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Woman agrees cemetery needs work

To the Editor,
I just read the letter of Nancy Meyers in Friday's edition.

Yes, I totally agree. Weeds and sandburrs are horrible. I discovered a very large varmint hole at my parents' grave site and also tire ruts where city trailers have been parked on my parents' gravesite.

How disrespectful is this!
I took my complaint to a city official and was assured the problem would be taken

care of right away.

Guess what, nothing happened! I took care of filling in the hole myself.

If it is to be our responsibility to totally take care of our loved one's final resting place, just say so. I think we as individuals are dependable.

End results — we do it anyway, so why pay a city employee.

Evelyn Paden
Norton

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654
Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor

Office hours:
8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports editor
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman circulation manager
Rich Meyers advertising representative
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Sonya Montgomery bookkeeping

