

Abuse of power is a scary thought

"The government giveth, and the government taketh away!" That statement was written by the chief counsel for the American Family Association Center for Law and Policy, a constitutional litigation firm, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was OK for a Connecticut local government to seize private homes to use in the private development of an office complex.

The key word is "private" — "private homes" and "private development." If it were for a highway, it might be different to seize property. But, it is ridiculous for a person to lose his/her home so a private developer can make money by building.

The Supreme Court is using the "takings clause" of the Fifth Amendment so the land can be used for an office complex. Why?

The city needs a greater tax revenue. And, does that justify the fact that someone's property will be taken away?

The government should not have the power to take away personal property and give it to someone else. Northwest Kansas residents could use some additional tax revenue but the thought of having city councilmen or commissioners go in and take someone's land, their house or businesses is scary.

Our forefathers crossed the ocean and fought wars so we did not have to live in fear of the government. They wrote the Constitution. And, then, to have something like this happen in the name of economic development is dumping everything they stood for.

What are the chances of something like this happening in our little corner of the world? Probably pretty slim but the people in the city of New London, Conn., probably never dreamed this would happen to them.

When it is time to vote, don't just mark the "yes" box for the judges or legislators. With judges taking more and more power, maybe it is time to study just what these judges stand for, some of the cases they have handled and decisions they have made before making that "mark."

— Karen Krien

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

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

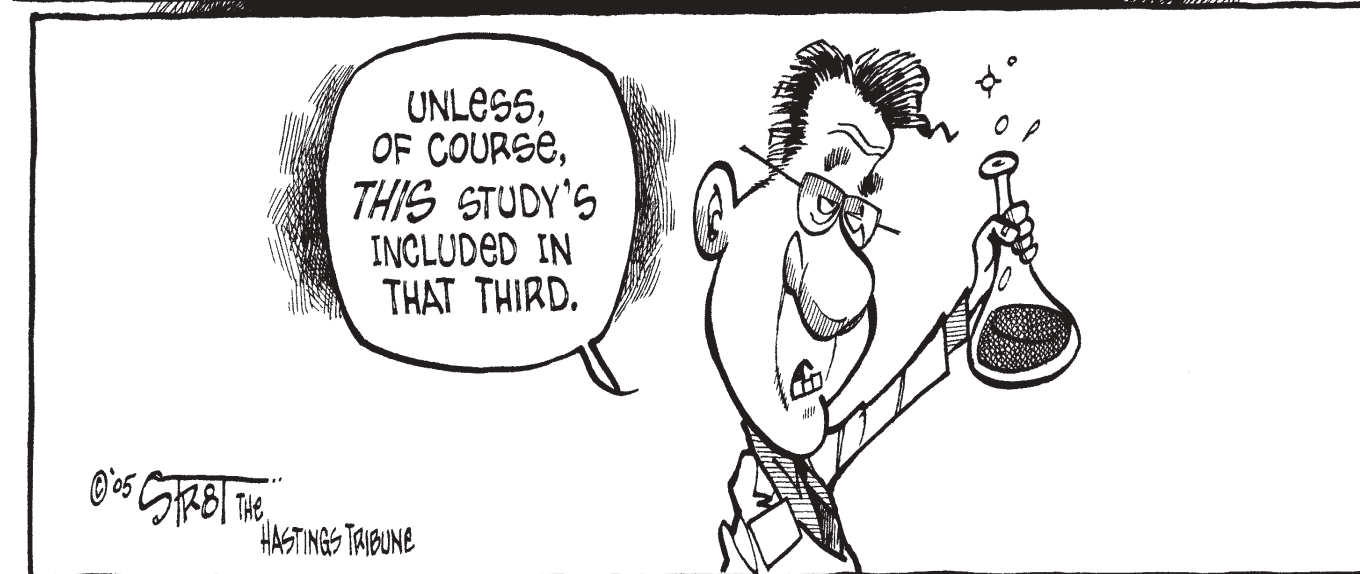
★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

★ **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

★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, 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



There is such a thing as one cat too many

Usually, I'm pretty sure of how many cats we have. It's four. Two of ours, and two our daughter parked with us when she found out Brad was allergic to cats.

I've tried to draw the line there, though Cynthia occasionally gets that "I-need-another-cat" look in her eye.

You may have noticed, if you read this page, that she like cats.

In fact, some of you complain about her "cat columns," and I know that adding to your burden is not my job.

This one is too good to pass up, though. Like I said, we have these four cats. There's Molly, white-and-gray, muscular, dominant, answers to Monster. There's April Alice, beige, blonde, a sweetheart.

Then the visitors, Jezebel and Ruppert, gray females, both daughter's, both shy most of the time.

At first our cats did not take kindly to the interlopers, especially Molly, who doesn't like other cats. She prefers the company of dogs.

After six months, things have quieted down. The gray cats have come out of the basement and occupy Lindsay's room. There's the occasional hiss, but fewer se-

On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



rious furballs.

Once in a while, Molly will spot one of the invaders in the yard, or on the bed, or in the living room, and give chase. I had to replace the flap on the cat door after a couple of those. Jez broke it right off, running full tilt one day.

The other night, though, we were getting ready for bed. That means two or three cats are jockeying for positions on the foot of the bed and the middle of the mattress and on the pillows.

April was there. So was Jez.

And suddenly, there was growling and hissing.

Another cat, I thought. I looked around. A dark shadow flitted across the room.

Ruppert, I thought.

No, too dark. Way too dark.

Hey, who is that, anyway?

There in the corner of our second-floor bedroom was the little black tomcat that has been hanging around the yard.

He's sleek and clean, and I'm pretty sure he's somebody's pet.

But there he was in our room, and none too sure he wanted anything to do with us. And this is a fully equipped little tomcat, front and rear.

Cynthia caught him. I hoisted him up by the scruff of his neck and marched him down to the door.

Toss. Things were quiet until the next morning, when I was trying to read the paper and eat breakfast.

There was meowing in the kitchen, and not a familiar meowing.

There, on the top of my rolltop desk, was the black tom.

Since he knew me by then, he was easier to catch. And toss.

But I fear he's found our food bowl by now. And he seems to like it here.

He's really a pretty nice cat, but another cat we don't need.

There's more, but I got to go.

I hear mewing in the kitchen again.

Congressmen speak out on methamphetamine problem

This week I sponsored legislation designed to fully fund the federal government's obligation to special education. H.R. 3145, The Mandatory IDEA Full Funding Compromise Act, would incrementally increase the amount of funding for special education until the government pays its full 40 percent share, by 2010.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed in 1975, the federal government agreed to pay 40 percent of the additional cost of educating students with disabilities. However, it has never fulfilled that obligation. Since coming to Congress, we have been successful in almost tripling the federal fund-

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



ing for special education — from 7.3 percent in 1996 to 18.6 percent in 2005. The legislation I sponsored would take the current funding level and gradually increase it over the next five years until it reaches the promised 40 percent level.

The lack of adequate federal funding places an unfair burden on local school

districts working to meet the education needs of all students, including a growing number of students with special needs. As Kansas struggles to come up with court-ordered state funding, the federal government needs to make sure it is doing its part. This legislation would set an achievable deadline by which the government would have to fund special ed as originally promised. It's long past time for the federal government to fulfill its commitment to our dedicated special education professionals, our students and the taxpayers of Kansas.

More Attention Needed on Methamphetamine Problem

The National Association of Counties recently released the results of a survey that identifies methamphetamine as the leading drug-related local law enforcement problem in the United States. This study echoes much of what I hear from Kansas law enforcement officials and other community leaders as I travel around the state. Kansas has worked hard to confront this drug problem, and I believe it is also time for our national drug control strategy to make methamphetamine a top priority.

This week, I joined my colleagues on the bipartisan Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine in sending a letter to President Bush, drawing his attention to the survey regarding the meth epidemic in America. While I applaud the work of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, it is necessary that Congress and the Administration recognize the devastating effects meth has had on our local communities and join together in this fight against meth. I will continue working to support federal efforts to enhance education, prevention, enforcement and treatment of this danger-

ous drug.

House Passes Regulations to Improve Worker Safety

On Tuesday, I supported House passage of legislation that would help improve the relationship between businesses and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency responsible for worker safety. While OSHA has been effective in reducing on-the-job deaths and injuries, some businesses have found the investigation process overly burdensome.

The legislation passed this week would allow OSHA to waive the deadline for challenging citations, expand the OSHA Review Commission, require courts to defer to decisions of the review commission and also included other provisions to provide some relief for small businesses. The legislation now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Visiting the USDA Rural Development Office

On Friday, on my way home from Washington, D.C., I stopped by the USDA Rural Development Office in Topeka and met with the Director, Chuck Banks. Banks updated me on several recent projects they have been involved in across the state. He is also a frequent visitor to my office in Washington, D.C.

One of the most recent issues I have been working with Banks and the Rural Development Office on is the effort to add additional housing in communities around Fort Riley. Earlier this month, I attended an event at the Fort, announcing \$25 million in guaranteed lending assistance through USDA's Rural Housing Program. This program will help Fort Riley soldiers and their families with financing opportunities to purchase homes in rural communities. With over 3,000

new troops arriving at the Fort over the next six months, this funding is very beneficial.

Big First Tour Continues in Gove County

This week, the Big First Listening Tour took me to Grinnell, in Gove County, where I joined area residents for the annual Harvest Festival Parade. This gave me the opportunity to see many Kansans during the parade, and to meet and talk with folks afterwards.

There are 18 more stops to go. For a full list of times and dates when I'll be in your county, visit here: <http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/041105TheTour.html>http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/041105TheTour.html

Also this weekend, I visited with central Kansas residents during the After Harvest Festival Parade in Ellinwood.

Contact Me

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You can also contact me through one of my offices: Hays District Office, 1200 Main Street, Suite 402, P.O. Box 249, Hays, Kansas 67601-0249, P: (785) 628-6401, F: (785) 628-3791; Hutchinson District Office, 1N Main, Suite 525, P.O. Box 1128, Hutchinson, 67504, P: (620) 665-6138, F: (620) 665-6360; Salina District Office, 119 West Iron, Suite 603, P.O. Box 766, Salina, KS 67402-0766, P: (785) 309-0572, F: (785) 827-6957; Washington D.C. Office, 2443 Rayburn H.O.B., Washington, DC 20515, P: (202) 225-2715, F: (202) 225-5124