

Raising taxes may be the solution for school funding

Demand is building to force the Kansas Legislature to raise taxes. Tax money is addictive, and the people who get it want not just what they got last year, but more. As with other drugs, the legislators should just say "no," but there will be great pressure to get them to say yes.

More than half the state's money goes for public schools, and the education lobby and teachers' union are the strongest single force behind state spending. Over the last decade, educators have gone beyond just hounding the Legislature to suing the state.

They seem to feel spending as much as they want is a basic right, and a power-hungry state Supreme Court backed them in the last legal fight. This resulted in the high court ordering the Legislature to spend more on schools, though that's a decision most of us thought was reserved for the Legislature elected by the people.

Nothing is more important to this state than its schools, and given a choice in a normal year, Kansans will back spending on their schools.

This is not a normal year, though. The governor and Legislature have cut nearly every agency, including colleges and universities in dire need of money. They are ready to begin a new round. Estimates show Kansas will be nearly \$260 million short by the end of the year June 30 without more cuts. Even more cuts may be required next year.

Schools were saved all but a fraction of these cuts so far, as they undoubtedly will be the next time. But in this fiscal emergency, they'll have to take some small share of the pain. That's what Kansas businesses and Kansas taxpayers are doing in this, the worst recession in recent memory.

With jobless rolls soaring and people scraping to pay their bills, who can afford to pay more taxes?

The rich? Hardly. It's all of us who will pay if sales or income taxes are raised or so-called "loopholes" closed. All of us who will suffer if business taxes are boosted and more people lose their jobs.

On the other hand, the state has not made any real cuts in its structure. So far, the governor has done mostly across-the-board cuts. No one has looked at state spending and asked, "do we really need all these agencies? What does this board or commission do?"

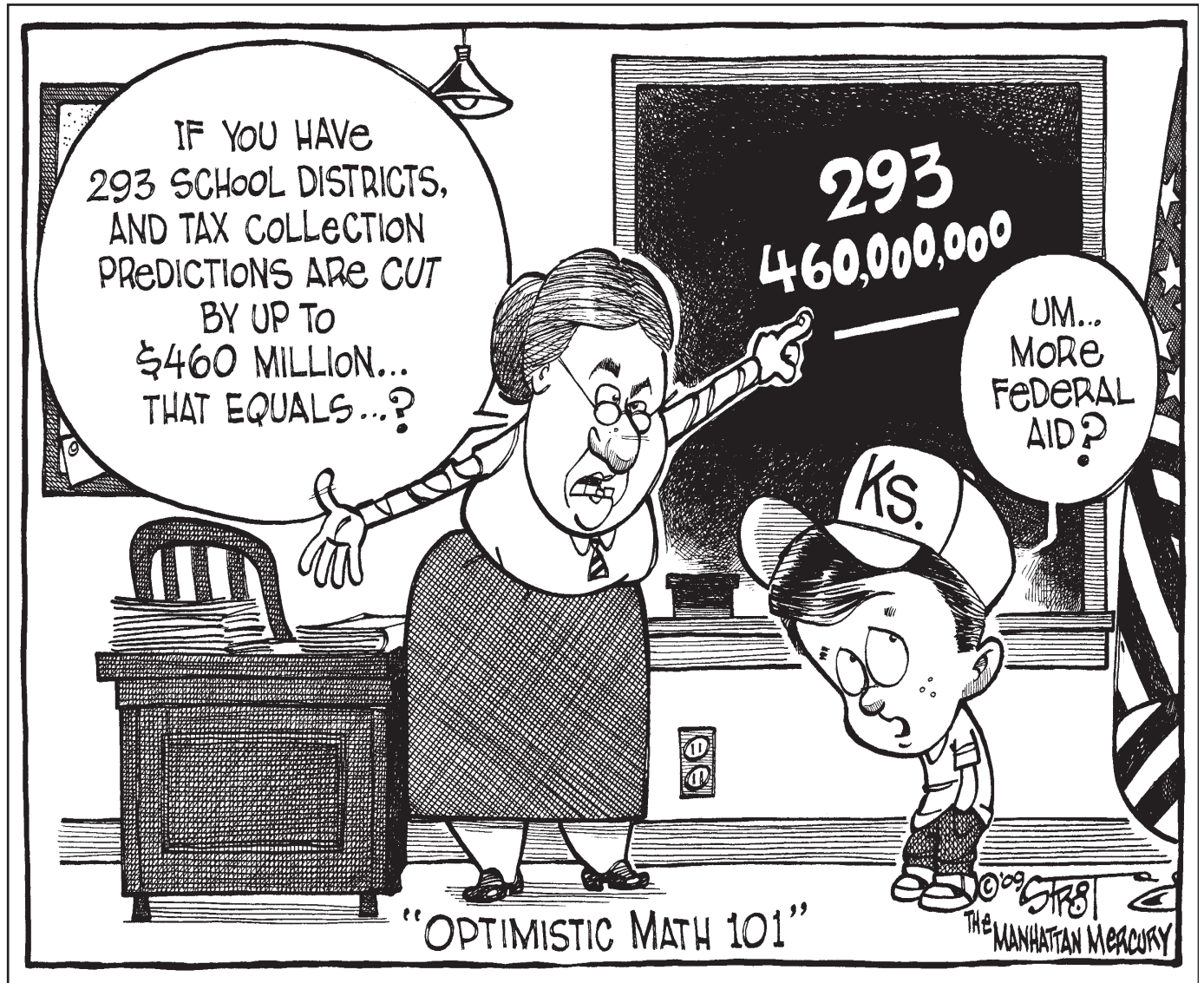
Someone should. This is a perfect time to streamline state government and eliminate not just a few people here and there, but whole agencies. The result would be a leaner, more efficient, more affordable government, a more competitive business climate and citizens with money to spend now and then.

And the state could spend its money on things that really count, like schools and colleges.

Legislators who still want to raise taxes and "save" all the state's programs might want to vote for a tax increase. We'll see how they fare come November.

Most voters, and we think, most legislators, will want to take the other path, the one that leads toward less spending and smaller government.

— Steve Haynes



Veterans Day honors those who served

I sat in the dining room of the American Legion on Nov. 11 enjoying a buffet supper. With me were several veterans who have either served or are serving our country in the armed services. There were family members present; young and old. Jake Durham stood up and asked that we sing "Oh Beautiful America." Then he asked two gentlemen to come up and tell us of their experiences on the Freedom Flight. At some point during the talks, I became misty eyed. It wasn't the accounts of the Freedom Flight—both spoke positively on the experiences they had. So, I've had to tune in to myself and ask just why I shed a few tears.

I'm so thankful that there are those who are willing to stand up and fight for our freedoms. I praise God each and every day for the freedoms that our forefathers established for this great nation. I had spoken of joining the services, when I was younger but my husband told me he had to give his blessing since we had a child and he wasn't willing to do this. At age 36, I could have entered the military



as a second lieutenant. Since my hopes of joining were squished, I've prayed for safe returns of each and every serviceman in hopes of them reuniting with their families.

But back to the supper at the Legion, I don't know if my welling tears were because I sat amongst a fraction of the souls who have stepped forward to protect me and this nation. I don't know if it was due to those who have served and died and I never got to thank them personally. For whatever reason, I believe that the continuance of this great nation rests on the actions of our national leader and his commands given to these brave

men and women who put themselves in harm everyday to protect my rights and freedom as a US citizen. I want to live the dreams that the Constitution was built on; I want to be able to worship in the church of my choice and declare that Christmas is all about Christ; I want to be able to say "God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and see no changes made in the currency that we now utilize; I want to go to sleep at night knowing that no foreign soldiers will hurt us on our own soil; I want to shout from the rafters that I appreciate all that each and every service man/woman has done to keep us a free nation.

I know, now, why I shed those tears that night — I sat awed at the power present in that room — knowing that my safety and freedom is guaranteed by men and women I've never met and never will. These same men and women cherish the same rights and freedom I do. God Bless the USA.

We ended the evening singing My Country 'Tis of Thee.

Sara Durham

Military or federal trial for terrorists?

The decision to try the Guantanamo prisoners in Federal Court in NYC has generated much discussion. Some feel the attackers should face a military trial while others favor applying our system of justice in civilian court.

I'm not sure if it is a lack of faith in our judicial system or if we are fearful of the idea one is innocent until proven guilty. Perhaps it is much more cynical for we know the information obtained through torture would not stand up in civilian court, one of the dangers when measures not upheld by the Geneva Convention are ignored.

No one wants to see those guilty of bombing the World Trade Center go free. Nor would we want someone who was not involved to have his name tied to this horrendous act.

There is a reason we hold trials for those charged with a crime. We know the fact someone has confessed to a crime or because law enforcement thinks they are guilty is not the criteria upon which we base our justice system.

We want a system which defends and upholds our beliefs. The argument these

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



individuals are not entitled to the rights of the people because they are not U.S. citizens holds no water. They may not be, but we are and our form of government should stand up to the test.

The primary reason given by those who favor a military commission is based on fear. Fear we cannot keep Americans safe if these prisoners are on American soil or fear they might get off because of a sympathetic jury... or fear, fear, fear.

In recent years whenever something comes up which certain groups do not want they cite the reason as fear. Whether it is this or health care reforms, power to take away life or someone wanting to take away all our guns.

Fear rears its ugly head and plows through our common sense. F.D.R. once

said, "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself," and truer words have never been spoken. We are a 'can do' nation. The fact that we would allow ourselves to be directed by this negative, anxiety producing emotion is unacceptable.

This goes beyond terrorists and the other political issues and strikes at the very core of who we are and what we stand for as Americans.

Bullies and power mongers didn't win in the school play yard and they have no place in our society.

I believe in our system of government, particularly the judicial process. I believe in the civilians in our country to be able to make decisions for the well being of our citizens and furthermore I believe in the ability of New Yorkers to carry out this critically important trial. After all, we are not a military form of government nor a church state.

As Abraham Lincoln so eloquently stated, "Government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth." God bless the people of the USA.



To....all the students who made the honor roll. (called in)

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• Most reasons for thumbs up include recognition to someone for an act of kindness, a group for something special they have undertaken, Grandma's or Grandpa's birthday, wedding anniversaries, happy birthdays in general. And you can probably think of some other reasons not listed here.

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