

Senate race heats up with attack ads

The Republican race for Senate heated up last week, with the No. 2 candidate showing just how desperate he is by launching attack ads against Rep. Jerry Moran.

How desperate? Some of the "charges" involved votes in the state Senate nearly 15 years ago on tax changes that even Rep. Todd Tiahrt once said he would have supported.

The truth is, as a congressman, Rep. Moran has a nearly unblemished record of conservative thinking. He's voted against every kind of tax and spending increase, even the multi-billion-dollar "bailout" plans promoted in the last Congress by President George W. Bush and the Republican leadership of the time.

Mr. Moran noted that during the Bush years, he'd been one of the few Republicans against the No Child Left Behind Act, basically a multi-billion federal takeover of local schools, and had even voted against the hugely expensive federal "COBRA" rules governing privacy at hospitals and clinics. But desperate candidates will do desperate things. Mr. Tiahrt has denied that he's the underdog, but more and more polls show him trailing the veteran western Kansas congressman.

It's true that Rep. Moran seems to have a much broader base of support across Kansas, appealing to both conservatives and moderates. His conservatism seems to be based in sound, traditional GOP thinking about spending and taxes. He's never been afraid to buck the White House or the leadership, even when it's his own party.

We can remember talking to Rep. Roy Blunt of Missouri when he was the Republican whip in the House, basically the enforcer for the speaker. Mr. Moran, he said, caused him a lot of trouble because he followed his own conscience, not the party's.

What's wrong with that?

Out here in the Big First district, we know Jerry Moran. We know his record and we know what kind of congressman he's been. He's the guy who's visited every county in the huge district - now 69 of 'em - every year, staying in touch with Main Street. The guy whose family remained in Hays, to keep him in touch with home. The guy who came back nearly every weekend of the year.

And the guy who voted against taxes, spending and outrageous earmarks every chance he got. That's the guy most of us will be voting for in August, not some fellow from Wichita who puts out shrill attack ads. Our friend, neighbor and representative, Jerry Moran.

We'll be proud to see him advance to the Senate.

- Steve Haynes

Reflecting on hope

Last week I received an anonymous gift. It was a bracelet with a single charm hanging from it, a disk with the word HOPE engraved in it. A stone was set where the "O" would have been. That gift caused me to reflect on how important hope is in our lives. Without hope, we feel low and gloomy, and life is without purpose or focus. When we have hope, we are able to meet the challenges life has for us.

With hope, we deal with those challenges in a couple of ways. One is acceptance; we accept the situation as it is and deal with it. The other is taking action; we make some behavioral changes to achieve what we hope for.

I think of the slaves in our country before the Civil War freed them. Many accepted life as it was, doing what they were told to do. For a number of them, their hope was in the afterlife, when they would be in Heaven and they would know equality. Others hoping for freedom in this life took action. Some ran away from their owners, others made it to freedom and then helped other slaves find freedom; still others chose to fight back.

Acceptance and action are both appropriate responses for the hopeful person. If a person hopes to win academic scholarships for college, she must take action. She needs to be focused on studying, making good grades and becoming a well-rounded individual. Simply sitting and daydreaming about earning scholarships isn't going to get that person very far in the application process.

When I retired from being a nurse educator, I hoped to be able to make a contribution to world peace, albeit in a

Acceptance
Rita
Speer



very small way. I wanted to go the war-torn area of Darfur and offer my nursing skills for a couple of months. As I was investigating possible ways of achieving that, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I knew then that it was not God's plan for me to go to Darfur. I put my energy then into recuperating from the surgeries and coping with chemotherapy as best I could. During that period of time, I came to understand how important hope was for me. It went from hoping I could find a comfortable position in my hospital bed to hoping the chemo would work and eventually have hair again. Many days acceptance was all I was capable of doing. After chemo was finished and I regained my strength, I hoped I could reach out to other breast cancer patients and make a difference in their lives. By then I was able to take action and do just that.

Did I give up my hope to do something for world peace? Well, going to Darfur is no longer in my plans. I do believe if I live peacefully and treat other people with respect and peace, it is one small step toward creating a peaceful world. It could be likened to the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil being a step in a hurricane in the Caribbean.

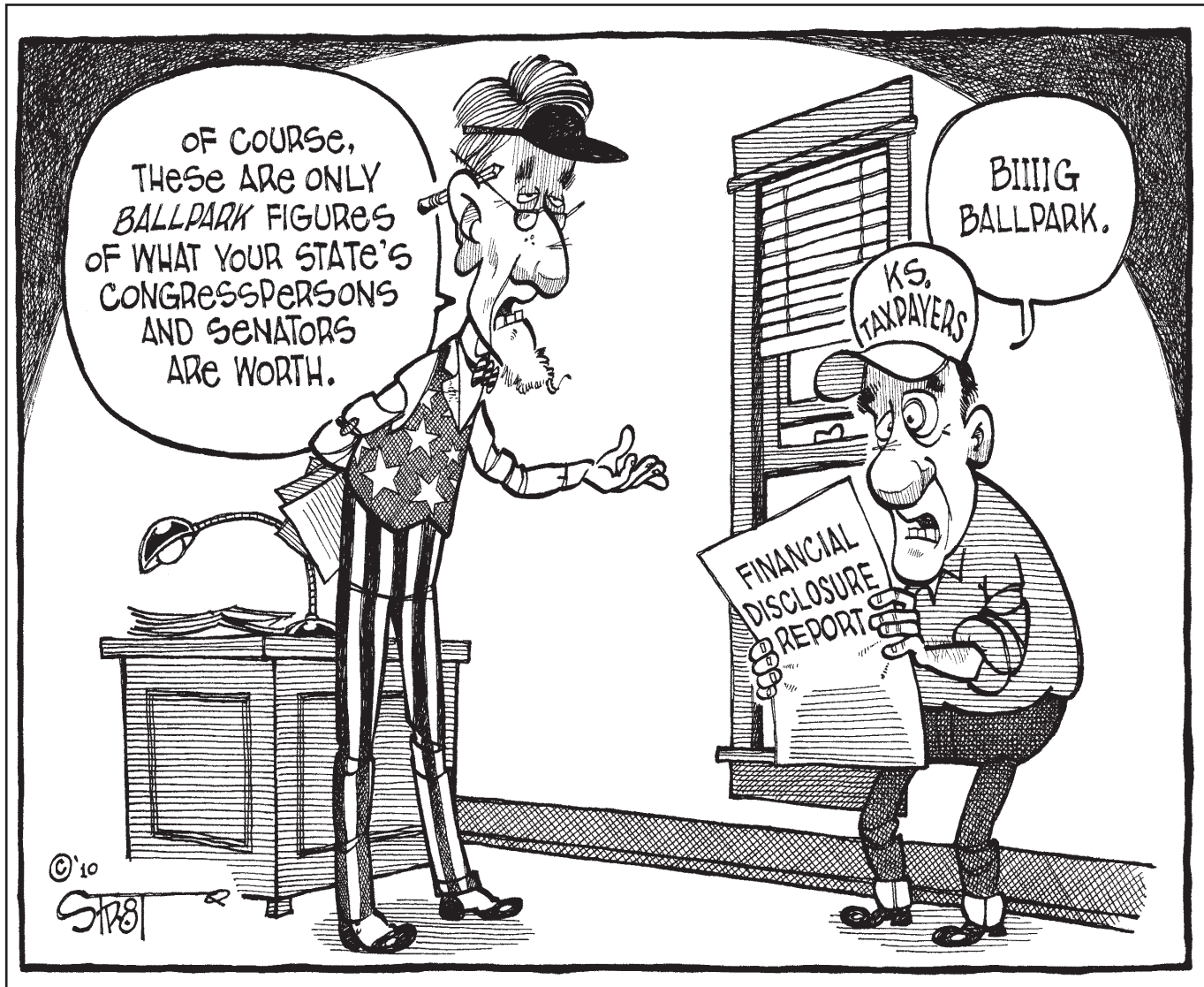
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Working towards a brighter future

This spring, thousands of Kansas graduates will join the workforce. My wife and I attended our oldest daughter's graduation at Kansas State University, and as we joined many parents in celebrating our graduates' success, my thoughts turned to their future.

Graduates today seek economic prosperity and opportunities similar to those their parents have enjoyed, but they are leaving college at a challenging time. Today's graduates face a tough job market, with one in 10 Americans unemployed and one in five underemployed.

Graduates who are fortunate enough to find a job will soon begin paying taxes, many for the first time. Kansans already work three months of the year to fulfill their annual tax obligations. Unfortunately, taxes will consume an even greater part of their take-home pay if government spending is not controlled.

In 2009, the federal government spent \$1.67 for every dollar it collected, and borrowed 43 cents for every dollar it spent. This out-of-control spending and borrowing jeopardizes the prosperity of future generations who will have to pay these debts.

In 1988, the year most 2010 college graduates were born, our national debt stood at \$2.6 trillion. Today, our nation's debt has ballooned to \$12.9 trillion - a fivefold increase just in their short lifetime.

Every student who walks across a graduation stage this spring will not only receive a diploma, but will also inherit their portion of the federal debt, now estimated at \$118,000 for every taxpayer. This growing figure does not account for

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



the unfunded liabilities of Social Security and Medicare, which total up to more than \$100 trillion - more than eight times the size of the entire national debt.

To ensure graduates today have the same opportunities as generations before them, the Washington spending spree must stop. Rather than continue to spend money we do not have, Congress needs to take three steps: adhere to a balanced budget, reduce government spending and pursue a strategy of job creation to get the American economy back on track.

One of the basic responsibilities of Congress is to produce an annual budget. Yet, almost halfway through 2010, Congress still does not have a budget. Kansas families and businesses struggle to balance their budgets and live within their means; Congress should do the same.

The lack of a budget shows that congressional leadership is in denial about the country's financial crisis, leaving the door open for even more runaway government spending. I have sponsored legislation to rein in spending by requiring the federal government to balance the budget each year. Congress has lived by a budget before and must do that again.

To get our fiscal house in order, we must reduce government spending. Americans are struggling, and Washington's solution of spending billions on

stimulus programs has failed miserably. This reckless spending piles debt on future generations.

Since 2009, the national debt has increased by over \$2 trillion and just this month, it reached a record-high of \$13 trillion. This spending comes at a time when Kansans are forced to tighten their belts and make tough choices.

Government should instead be working to create the conditions for today's graduates and future generations to prosper. History shows that sustainable economic growth starts with the private sector.

Small businesses are the backbone of the Kansas economy, and during these difficult times, it is more important than ever to allow businesses to grow, create jobs and prosper. To encourage job growth, I have authored legislation to reduce an employer's cost of doing business and encourage reinvestment. This legislation, the Small Business Jobs and Tax Relief Act, contains key tax incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to start and expand small businesses and create new jobs.

Americans are known for their enterprising spirit and strong resolve. Our country will recover when we begin living within our means, cutting government spending and creating a pro-jobs environment.

My generation of Americans has a responsibility to the next generation. As a parent and a member of Congress, I will work for common-sense solutions to our country's economic problems, so our graduates can enjoy a brighter, more hopeful future.

Working hard at relationships

Few things point to the hard work of relationships more than the phrase, "We just grew apart." The announcement of the separation and pending divorce of Al and Tipper Gore generated great sadness for me. Not because I am a huge fan of the couple, I'm not, but rather because I am a huge fan of long standing marriages surviving the odds. I don't know if the quoted reason is the reason, but I do believe that growing apart is a poor excuse for ending a family. If we grow apart we can also work to grow together. Many feel if their marriage has passed through the critical stages of child rearing, then, if a couple decides to 'split the sheets' it is okay. Home is where the parents are and the dissolution of a marriage forever colors memories of childhood regardless of the ages of children at the time of parents' divorce. A good friend whose husband had died very young told me the great advantage of death over divorce is the lasting memories, not ones tainted by children wondering, "I thought they were happy."

Most people work hard at their jobs/careers. Many try to build close relationships with fellow worshippers at church. We try to build fences with neighbors.

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



But when it comes to maneuvering the ups and downs of the interpersonal relationship with a spouse we frequently fail miserably. Too many people spend more energy building friendships than the lasting bonds of marriage; or staring into the eyes of a troubled good friend than looking into a spouse's eyes as they struggle with career or personal battles. All too frequently we are more engaged in seeing our own needs met than reaching out to our life partner.

When our children were young and many around us were divorcing, one of our sons asked, "Will you and Daddy get a divorce?" I am a firm believer you can never say never and also you can't lie to children. My answer has always been, "I can't imagine that ever happening. We work every day to prevent that."

Many believe marriages shouldn't be

hard work, believing once you have 'tied the knot,' so to speak, the bonds are secure. Some will tell you they have never had any problems, just not enough money or a difference in work ethic, etc. All marriages have hurdles. As my mother used to say, if a couple says they never argue then one of them isn't necessary.

The failing of any marriage is a loss, but the failure of a long standing union of prominent figures only highlights the difficulties encountered in maintaining a lasting relationship. It increases the feelings of vulnerability for all couples and chips away at the foundation of all unions. Certainly abuse and addiction are grounds to end a union, but I'm not sure 'growing apart' is valid. As we grow older we will undoubtedly grow and sometimes in different directions, but that is the time we focus on what brought us together, what we share (children and memories). Sometimes commitment is the binding force until once again we fall in love with that person. As Alan Alda once said, the greatest thing about these ups and downs is that when you fall in love with that long time mate again you know them so well. Well trodden paths do not have to equal ruts.

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