

### Voter fraud in Kansas becomes campaign issue

**V**oter fraud in Kansas? Not that anybody ever heard of. But one candidate for secretary of state has made rooting out voter fraud the centerpiece of his campaign. Kris Kobach, a law-school professor from Wyandotte County, wants new rules for registration and requiring photo identification for each voter, similar to laws he helped write for Arizona.

Never mind that no one, including apparently Mr. Kobach, has any proof of widespread voter fraud in Kansas. This guy is on a mission.

Candidate Kobach, a former Republican state chairman who's considered a national expert on immigration law, helped to write the controversial Arizona law that requires police to question those suspected of being illegal immigrants. The voter-fraud rap apparently relates to his immigration phobia.

But if illegal immigrants are voting as Kansas citizens, no one seems to have caught them. Few, if any, criminal complaints have been filed. No one is complaining to the county attorneys across the state, or the attorney general.

There's just no evidence that illegal immigrants are trying to vote in Kansas, or that any other kind of election fraud is happening.

It's like the complaint that immigrants don't pay taxes. If they are on somebody's payroll, they're paying income and Social Security taxes, even if it's for a fake number. If they shop, they pay sales taxes. If they rent, then the landlord pays their property taxes.

We're all for making people prove who they are when they register to vote. Citizenship is a requirement for voting.

But what about the idea of showing a photo ID every time you vote? What's next? A law saying that citizens must carry papers to travel around the state, like in some communist dictatorship?

Kansas is a small, still largely rural state. Our election judges know their voters and should be able to spot fraud when they see it. We don't need insulting laws that threaten our basic freedoms.

We can and should enforce our election laws. The current secretary of state and the last one both say that's being done. The incumbent, Democrat Chris Biggs, a former prosecutor, says he knows of no problem.

"There's no suggestion in the evidence that we have a major voter fraud problem," Biggs said, "and certainly not one connected to illegal immigration."

Every candidate has to have a platform, a theme to hang his campaign on. But the record suggests that Mr. Kobach is overly concerned with supposed effects of illegal immigration. It's as if he's trying to create an issue where no problem exists.

Our immigration laws could use some reform, but that's mostly a federal issue. Kansas has no need to get involved.

As for Mr. Kobach and his cries of voter fraud, we think it's a case of a solution looking for a problem.

And while Kansas has a lot of problems, this just isn't one of them. It's a phony.

— Steve Haynes

### 'God has a sense of humor'

**I** quote Jack when I say, "God has a sense of humor; it is the devil who can't laugh." This week lightning struck a 62 feet tall, 40 feet wide statue of the upper torso of Jesus, fondly known as 'Touchdown Jesus.'

The white plastic/steel structure which stood outside the nondenominational Solid Rock Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, burned to the ground.

People were gathering up pieces of burned foam for memories of this striking occasion.

Now if a similar occurrence directed at a Muslim mosque had taken place many Christians would have interpreted this as a sign of displeasure from God. In this instance, mmm.

Perhaps it is a sign from God helping us to realize a lily white figure of Jesus is not a factual depiction. Plus if God has the same aversion to plastic figures as I have to plastic flowers, the erection was sure to be short lived.

We have all seen the signs along the road of the blue eyed, fair skinned Jesus and wondered where did this image originate? Common sense and history tells us the man/God known as the Christian Savior did not walk out of the desert with fair skin.

In our search for common ground we sometimes form our own image. Remem-

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ber the lyrics, as sung by James Taylor, "Some children see him lily white, the baby Jesus born this night.

"Some children see Him almond eyed, with skin of golden hue. Some children see Him dark as they, Sweet Mary's Son to whom we pray. The children in each different place, Will see the baby Jesus' face, like theirs but bright with heavenly grace."

Every now and then we have to take a good look at how our religion and our faith are depicted. Those of a different religion such as Protestant versus Catholic find each other's articles of faith strange, but to the believer they hold special meaning and some people believe hold special powers.

Different philosophies offer even greater variations, no less significant to the believer however.

As long as one's faith is intact the religion has little bearing on anything and we can laugh with God.

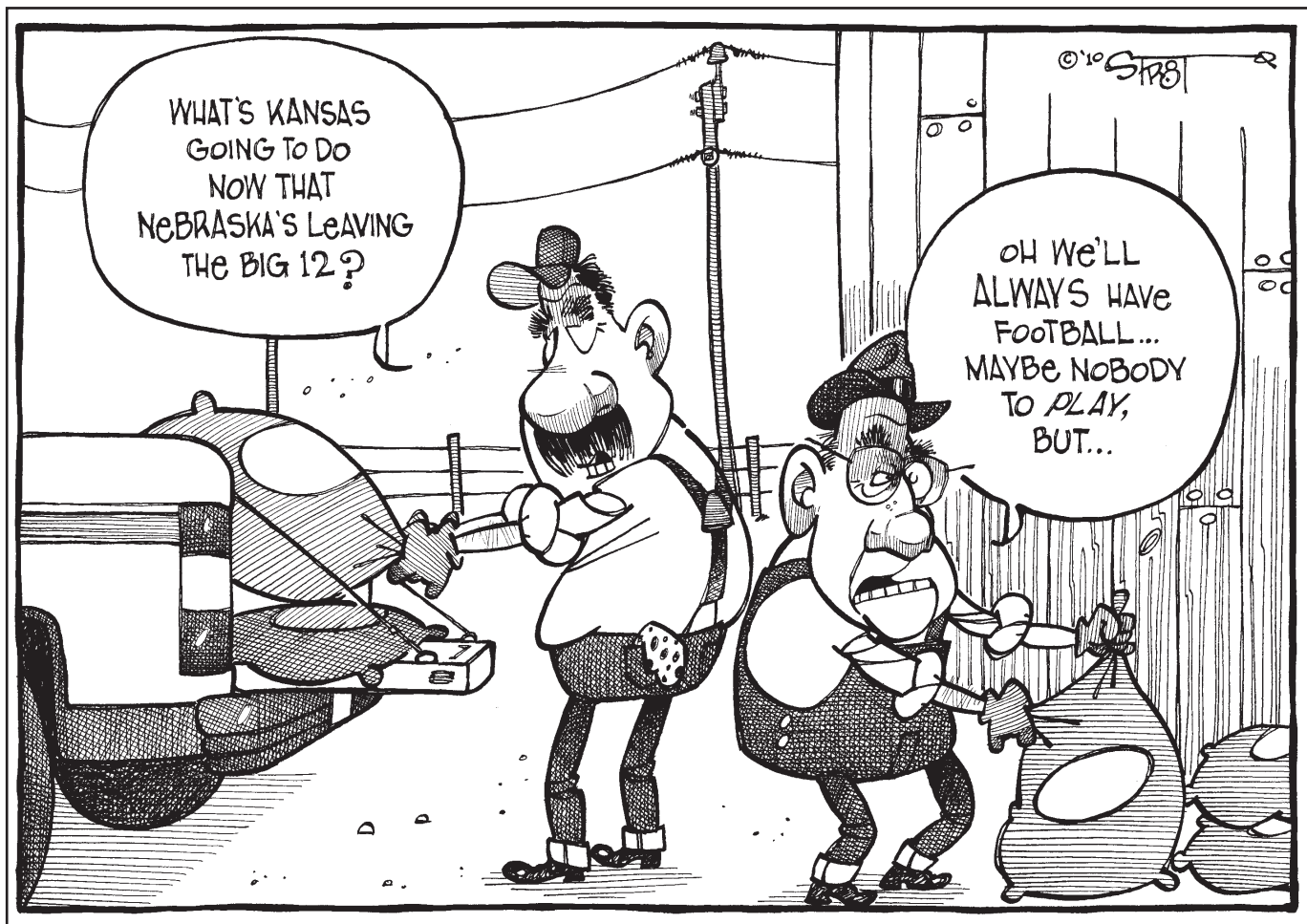
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### Compassion important for many reasons

**T**here was recently an item in the newspaper about someone ticketed for driving without a license. At the hearing, the charge was dropped because it was an emergency situation. That reminded me of the mid 60's when my husband was in seminary in Chicago. One of his professors had written a book on Situation Ethics. After reading it, I came to understand what I had experienced about life thus far—that life and the decisions we face are frequently neither black nor white but many shades of gray.

And that is where compassion is so important. When I am faced with a decision, I look at the effect my choice will have on others as well as myself. Is it the most loving choice? Am I making a choice that will provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people? If I keep these things in mind, then I believe I will make the best decision. I am fortunate I am not in a position where I must make life-and-death choices. But like other

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people, I face situations in which I must make a conscious choice between A or B. I think about it, use my husband as a sounding board, pray about it and then do what I feel is the most loving thing.

I keep in mind how my choices will affect others. It may be as simple as keeping my mouth closed, not responding to a remark another person makes, because I don't want to say something in anger and possibly hurt someone else. It may be more complex, such as dealing with a multi-layered conflict. In any event, I try to be aware of the effect any choice I make will have on other people.

Of course I am not always successful.

Sometimes I speak impulsively, without thinking about the consequences. But as I get older, I find it is easier to think things through before speaking out or making a decision. I genuinely consider how what I may do will affect others. At times it may just be my husband who is affected, but I often weigh what I want against what is best for him or for us.

Showing compassion is not just about feeding the hungry or visiting the imprisoned; it means we do what is the most loving thing for the people involved in our day-to-day choices. We need to examine all those shades of gray of our lives and do the most loving thing. Sometimes that means we say nothing or do nothing. For example, I wondered what I could do about the horrible consequences of the oil spill in the Gulf. I considered volunteering to wash birds, and then I felt my best choice—my most loving choice—was to stay at home and be here for my husband. That isn't to say the birds don't matter, but he is more important to me.

### 2010 Legislative session ends

**Senate Roundup**  
**Sen. Steve Morris**



that will also create jobs in communities across Kansas.

The decision to increase the sales tax was not reached lightly. The one-cent sales tax increase was chosen because nearly everyone - including non-residents who work, shop or travel through Kansas - pay into the system.

A one-cent sales tax allows Kansas to remain competitive with its neighbors which, despite having sometimes lower state sales taxes, often have higher local taxes. By spreading the burden across nearly everyone, we reduced the amount any one individual pays into the system, and we protected the poorest Kansans from the brunt of this increase by including food tax rebates and income tax credits.

Of course, some lawmakers and organizations chose a different path . . . one not part of the solution. It is not surprising these same people are now busy spreading false or misleading information in an effort to frighten Kansans and score political points.

In fact, some of the same legislators who vocally opposed this modest sales tax increase actually supported a 2002 effort to increase the sales tax rate, claim-

ing it would be a catalyst for economic growth. They were right. Three years after that increase, the Kansas economy grew with more than 35,000 new jobs.

Kansans are resilient, and despite being in the throes of a stubborn recession, our state will come back better and stronger than ever. The start to economic recovery began in Topeka, but will end in coffee shops, diners, aircraft assembly lines, classrooms and Main Streets across our state when those who want to work, can find good jobs.

By cutting budgets, reining in spending and providing a responsible approach to revenues, we have been able to meet the state's obligations and keep our state fiscally whole. Kansans benefit from a sound, responsible, efficient and effective state government.

At the end of the day, we take the trust voters place in us very seriously. We are not professional politicians; citizen-legislators are teachers, farmers/ranchers, doctors, retirees, lawyers, small business owners and bankers - Kansans just like you. We come together every year for 90 days to make difficult decisions on behalf of our neighbors, our families and our fellow citizens.

The one thing we all agree on is that our best days are ahead, and we are optimistic about the future. This year was about making choices. The steps taken by lawmakers who chose to be part of the solution will set the groundwork for increased economic growth and stability in the years to come.



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