

Outside forces attempt to manipulate voters

Republican voters in northwest Kansas got their first taste for the season of "attack" ads a week or two ago when a flier arrived in the mail denouncing state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer. There would be more to come.

The mysterious oversized postcard appeared in mailboxes with no explanation of where it came from. The required "credit" line says the mailing was paid for by the "Kansas Jobs PAC (political action committee), William Wilson, treasurer," nothing more.

No one had ever heard of the committee. State documents online show it was created and registered June 16 with the state Governmental Ethics Commission by Mr. Wilson. The form lists a post office box in Topeka for an address and a phone in the Tecumseh area east of the capital city, most likely someone's home.

The copy is pure political heat: Over a photo of a magician holding a wand above a top hat, the copy says: "State Senator Ralph Ostmeyer is trying to make his votes for higher taxes disappear. Don't be fooled by his cheap political tricks."

The senator did vote for a temporary increase in the state sales tax a couple of years ago when the state was in a real bind. He never tried to hide that vote, however. He says he thinks the more recent votes listed may have been on amendments to bills that might not have passed.

"Tax raisin' Ralph can't be trusted with our tax dollars," the flier says.

Turns out, however, that the groups paying for the flier were among those pushing hardest for the same tax increase.

Sen. Ostmeyer said he was puzzled as to who or what group generated the mailing. He estimated it might cost \$7,000 to blanket a district like that. Though the flier sounded a conservative theme, he discounted the idea that one of the many conservative "PACs" had put out the flier.

"I've been endorsed by all the conservative groups," he said. "I'm the conservative in this race."

He speculated that Democrats might want to disrupt the Republican primary, setting up a possible victory in the fall for Sen. Allen Schmidt of Hays, an appointed legislator who has been thrown into Mr. Ostmeyer's 40th District. It turns out, he was not far from wrong; financial reports filed last week showed the "Jobs" group was financed by labor unions, including the Teamsters (\$15,000) and the teachers (\$50,000), and by a "PAC" organized to back liberal Republicans (\$120,000) who control the Senate leadership. At least two other front groups were created to spread the money around, records show.

The senator said he'd checked with Sen. Jay Emler, the majority leader, and he had heard of only one other district where a senator had been the target of a similar anonymous attack. However, the Jobs PAC financial reports list spending for attacks in at least one or two other Senate races. It gave money to many of the "moderate," or liberal, candidates for the Senate, and spent more on support ads.

Sen. Ostmeyer's primary opponent, John Miller, a long-time Norton County commissioner, said he wasn't a whole lot happier about the attack.

"I knew about it when you knew about it," he said, noting that he'd received one in the mail and gotten a phone call the same day.

He said he was campaigning in Logan County when a voter called to say she'd gotten "a postcard from you" that day.

"I just wish people would stay out of this," he said. "Ralph said in the beginning he wanted to keep the primary fair and above board."

"I have no clue (who's behind it)."

However, the "Jobs PAC" reported helping to pay for radio and newspaper ads for Mr. Miller's campaign.

Sen. Ostmeyer said he feared there might be radio attack ads from a similar source in the final days before Tuesday's primary election. A couple more fliers did appear.

Something is wrong when outside forces and outside money attempt to manipulate a legislative race way out here, covering their tracks and hiding their true identity. It'd be a shame to allow anonymous pols hiding behind a postoffice box somewhere in eastern Kansas to sway our decisions.

On the
Prairie Dog
Steve Haynes



Going off the facts and not accusations

Healthy discussion and disagreement are at the heart of democracy. What isn't acceptable, however is when people try to support their position through fabrications. I feel this is the case with the swimming pool. It should pass or fail based on its own merit, not on opposition that is not based on facts.

I set out to address some of the information which has been erroneously written or stated. Below you will find the results of my inquiry. Let's first remember to compare apples to apples, not apples to oranges. Just as we would not expect Norton to build the same size pool as Hays, neither would Sheridan County nor Decatur County build the same size as Norton County.

County	Decatur	Norton	Sheridan
Population	2,855	5,330	2,435
Population Under 18	18.5%	19.9%	23.2%
Population Over 65	26.8%	18.3%	22.8%
Below Poverty Level	16.2%	9.99%	15.4%

In mid-2011, a motion was made and passed to request bids for the swimming pool facility inspection and for a technical evaluation. Shortly thereafter four bids were received and Aquatic Design was chosen. Was it the lowest bid? No.

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



Were they the highest bid? No. A major reason for choosing Aquatic Design was because they were the only company who had recommended renovation rather than replacement for other Kansas pools. This coupled with the fact Aquatic Design is a Kansas company.

The pool design was presented and then was modified with input from the public through the pool survey on the

website. When the sales tax passes, the construction plans and specifications will follow. The Council is obligated to stay within the budget.

Some are concerned about the cost of the pool and that is a major consideration. One penny of each dollar we spend in Norton will build our pool.

It is hoped the cost of admission will continue to be a reasonable amount, just like the Norton Theatre. The cost is reasonable for the makeup of our community. All cities have certain things they provide for their citizens. A way of saying thank you for choosing this place as your home.

There will be those who oppose the building of a new pool for a variety of reasons and that is the beauty of a democracy. But if you oppose it, do so with facts, not accusations. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Urging everyone to go out and vote Tuesday

Tuesday is Primary Election Day. I urge you to vote.

Earlier I had written that I planned to change my registration to unaffiliated. Due to sheer laziness I never bothered. Before you read further: keep in mind I do not live in Norton County!

Judging by the number of signs along the highways and byways there are a lot of hotly contested elections.

I'm happy to have an opportunity to choose our next county commissioner. There is a candidate I feel worthy of my support. (All the while knowing with the problems facing the county: declining population, low tax base, outdated infrastructure; it won't make any difference who holds the office.) Makes one wonder at the sanity of anyone who wants the job.

We have at least three races in the courthouse. Sometimes I vote for the upstarts just to shake up the establishment. But the county is small, thus I am giving it due consideration.

One of the candidates took the time to knock on my door and ask for my vote. I was not available to talk to her. She talked to the husband (who is unaffiliated thus cannot vote).

I'm convinced she would be a fine office holder. However as he explained it to me, part of the reason she feels called to serve is the office pays more

This Too
Shall Pass
Nancy
Hagman



than her current gig. She isn't going to get rich, but at least she won't have to hold two jobs to make ends meet.

The reason another candidate is running is he has become disabled and can no longer do the physical labor required in his previous occupation.

Over the years it has come up several times that the reason various people run for county office is because of health insurance. There is a rumored case of that this year in a neighboring county.

Gotta love Republicans! Compassionate Conservatives who want churches and non-profits to take over the role of caring for those who cannot help themselves.

Short a little on the rent? Disabled? Lack Health Insurance?

Don't go to SRS, go ask at your church or better yet run for public office.

Just a question; doesn't that also make you a burden to taxpayers? It almost makes me wonder if this is why

Kansas has so many governing units. It's a way for ordinary (Republican) citizens to get a little tax money of their own, remaining virtuous. After all they "worked" for it!

My musings over Jenny and the fundraiser to help her pay for her healthcare; brought a comment from a friend. "When money is raised through benefit meals and silent auctions we get to choose where our money goes."

Unlike paying taxes and letting Government decide.

On the face of it this seems valid. Later it hit me. Remember the Republican fear mongering about "death panels"? This woman is not a doctor or nurse, nor has she ever worked in health care. She is not an insurance agent, has never worked insurance claims. She has no experience with setting policy in these areas. No background in research as far as determining which treatments are effective.

I believe her to be a compassionate person. And I am certain she did not mean for her thought to be applied to the big picture of healthcare. Which would be: no one should have health insurance. If you get sick you have a bake sale and let the public decide if you live or die.

Tuesday is Primary Day. Vote! There is more at stake than it may seem!

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kansas

Call Dana for your next ad. 877-3361!

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Kansas Press Association



Great job to all 4-Her's! Job well done! Emailed in.

Thumbs up to Deb and Curtis Eveleigh and their staff for another successful fair. Called in.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.