

Giving illegals a driver's license would solve a lot

This may seem a strange thing to advocate, but Kansas should follow the lead of California and resume giving driver's licenses to "undocumented," or illegal, aliens living here.

Actually, California was not the first state to start issuing licenses to noncitizens, only the 11th. Others include Oregon and our neighbor to the west, Colorado.

Why? First, having a license should allow illegals to get insurance again. Right now, thousands of these people, mostly hard-working folks with jobs, have to drive without insurance because they can't get a license.

Second, it will allow the same people to have a state-issued ID without qualifying them for welfare, medical aid or any other government programs. Most states issue a separate type of license for the undocumented, but at least they get into the system.

And finally, it could take the edge off a campaign to paint the Republican party as anti-minority. This is an issue that Republicans and Democrats should be able to agree on.

We are not talking about immigration "reform" here, or any sort of amnesty for illegal entry. Those are issues Congress will have to solve.

What we would be saying is that if people are going to drive here, they must follow American laws, register for an American driver's license and buy American insurance for their vehicles.

States can't enforce immigration laws anyway. They will have to leave the tough decisions to the feds.

Many Kansas police officials said it was a mistake to exclude this group from state-issued licenses because of the insurance problem and because it left them completely outside the system. That hasn't changed.

But the state Legislature got swept up in a wave of hysteria about illegal immigration and made a decision that causes more problems than it solves.

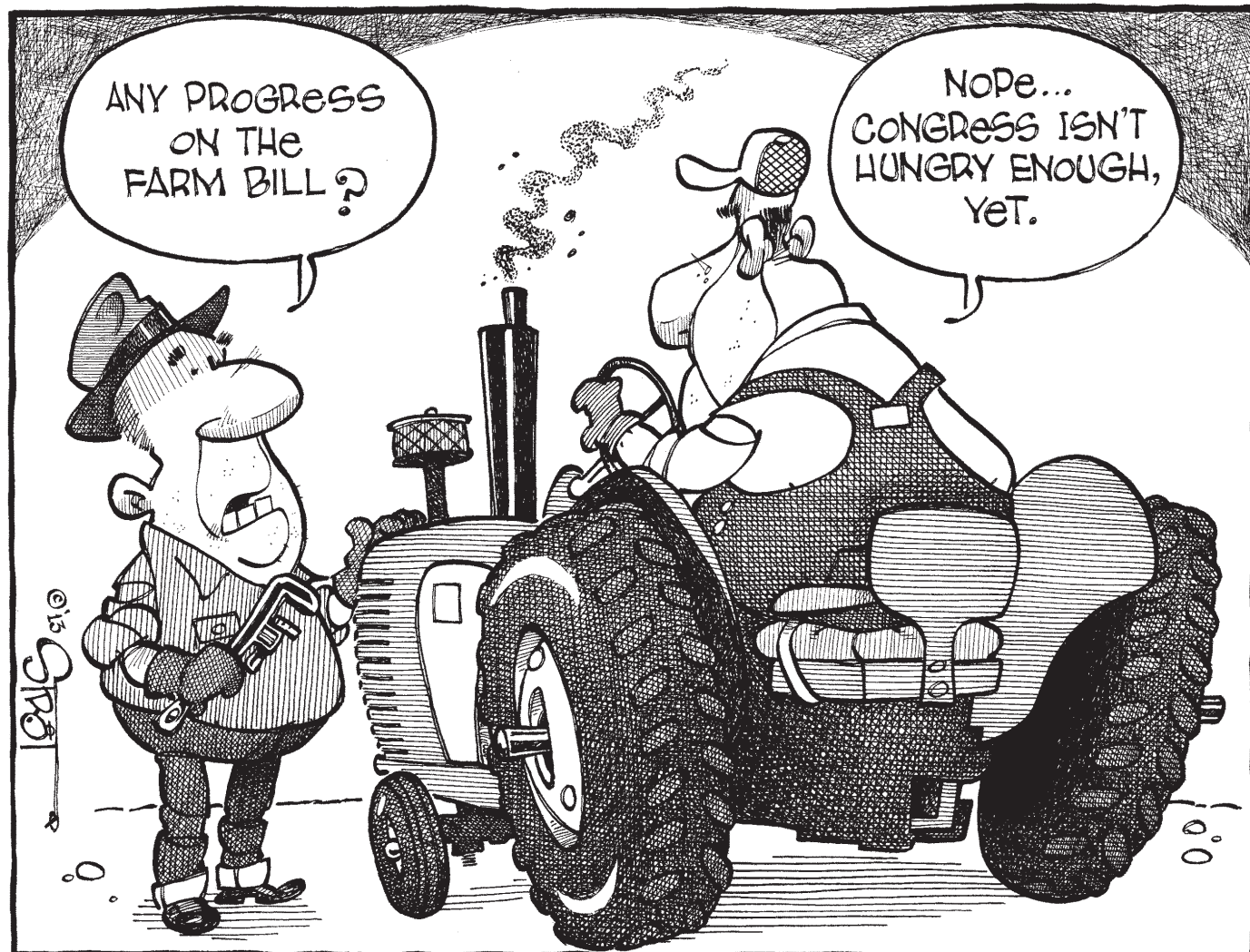
Many good, conservative Republicans, including farmers and their organizations, business people and others desperate for workers, know that immigrants usually come here only to work. Often, jobs can't be filled without hiring immigrants, and these people would not come here if we didn't have jobs. In fact, they did not come during the late, lamented Great Recession, when immigration numbers actually dropped.

We don't believe that illegals should be able to get any government benefits while here, including welfare, Medicaid, Social Security and the like. Even legal immigrants should not be allowed to come here just to get welfare.

But children, often U.S. citizens themselves, do need an education, and anyone who's driving here needs to have a license, proper training and basic insurance. It's to everyone's benefit to see that happen.

Gov. Sam Brownback and the Republican-dominated Legislature need to take a look at the problem and come up with a solution that includes making sure all drivers have a license and insurance. Everyone has a stake in that.

— Steve Haynes



And it goes to the lowest bidder

So the joke goes, "How would you feel if you were sitting on top of a rocket built by contractors where all the parts went out to the lowest bidder?" So goes most government purchases. We want the most for our money, and so by law, most purchases must be awarded for the smallest amount. An exception to this is the Obamacare website. Why? A company known as CGI Federal, a U.S. subsidiary of a Canadian company, received a major portion of the project through a contract awarded by, "a federal procurement system loophole." CGI is a company with a rather spotty record of pricing and performance.

I think we would have been better sitting on top of a website awarded to the lowest bidder. Whatever the reason for bypassing the standard system is, the outcome has been disastrous. Using loopholes certainly is not new, nor is it

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



illegal. What it is, however, is not right. When you have a program as controversial as the Affordable Health Care Act, why not cross every "t" and dot every "i"? Why not follow a standard course right down the line?

I have three frustrations. One is not sending the website out for bidding; two, is choosing a company with such a shady history; and three is not choosing a U.S. company to design and operate the website. I have nothing against a Canadian company and had we cho-

sen this company from a list of bidders, I would have no complaint, but we didn't.

As for the website's disastrous beginning, knowing and living with IT people, they never, ever have enough time to perfect a program. Having said that, last minute changes in code will almost surely end in failure. I do believe that all the controversy regarding the law has impacted the chance for a smooth transition, but that isn't an excuse. The problem is lack of accountability; lack of adherence and POLITICS. On both sides.

Does this mean I now oppose Obamacare? Not on your life. What I oppose is a political chess game that uses uninsured Americans as pawns. A chess game that is being played by all in Washington. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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OFFICE HOURS:
8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

STAFF

Dana Paxton..... General Manager
Advertising Director/Managing Editor
email: dpaxton@nwkanssas.com
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports
nortontelegram@nwkanssas.com
Michael Stephens..... Reporter
Society Editor/Area Sports
mstephens@nwkanssas.com
Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production
Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager



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How bad does it have to be before we react

Veteran's Day has passed. A time to thank those who serve; to pray for a world in which there is no need for soldiers.

There are endless debates about the military and the role of the United States in conflicts around the world.

I vacillate. My husband and many friends argue against sending more Americans into harm's way in the Mid-East.

In the darkest hours it appears we have sacrificed far too many lives for causes that were doomed from the beginning. World War I and II were the righteous wars.

Vietnam was my generation's war. It defies understanding: then and now. But perhaps we have finally come to terms with that period of history, by honoring rather than disparaging those who served.

Our involvement in the Mid-East has taken many directions: humanitarianism, revenge, greed, pre-emptive protection of our own sovereignty, a desire to spread democracy etc. Most of our reasoning appears to be misguided after action is taken.

Nonetheless, I remain supportive of military involvement in the area. I believe we must get to the bottom of what is going on in Syria and intervene, if necessary, rather than leave it to the Russians.

My conviction comes from reading "I Shall Live" the true account of Henry Orenstein's experiences during WWII. A Polish Jew, Orenstein survived the prison camps and immigrated to the United States after being liber-

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



ated. An uncle living in the USA tried to persuade the family to leave before Germany invaded Poland. The reasons the family stayed were complex but part of it was they did not believe the world would allow Hitler to advance his power.

When the war began, Orenstein greatly admired the stiff resolve of the British. And he always anticipated the Yankees would save the day. At each turn (before the bombing of Pearl Harbor) he would think, "Now the Yanks will come."

We did not. What if we had intervened earlier? If Hitler had been stopped before the first concentration camp was built, would we be saying, "You know; we never should have interfered with Germany. We lost soldiers and countless others were maimed over nothing."

This is what I think of when I consider Syria, how bad does it have to be before we are moved to action? Maybe we should have stayed out of Iraq and Afghanistan; our efforts seem to have been in vain and at great cost to our soldiers. But we have no way of knowing what has been prevented by those actions.

We know what happened in WWII: there were three million, three hundred thousand Jews in Poland before World War II. There were fifty thousand after. (NOTE: Not all were killed, some were displaced.) Two thirds (six million) of all the Jews in Europe were killed during WWII.

Orenstein's book says, "Winston Churchill wrote in his memoirs that on December 7, 1941 for the first time since the beginning of the war, he had a really good night's sleep. He was certain now of a victory."

War is a terrible thing, but sometimes a necessary thing.

Gandhi said, "When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants, and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end they always fall. Think of it always."

Gandhi accomplished much by peaceful protest. Yet he died a violent death.

Hitler was for a time invincible. Would he have fallen if we Yanks had not entered the war?

Gandhi also said "What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism of the holy name of liberty or democracy?"

None; but it does make a difference to those of us who believe in liberty and democracy. It affirms our goodness and decency. And it is never too late to do the right thing!



A huge thumbs up to Rose Garrison for all of her hard work decorating the storefronts in the Heaton building for Christmas. They look great. Norton is very lucky to have her because she does so much for our community. Brought 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.