

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Kansas don't like governor on road

Absentee governors are less noticeable than absentee members of Congress, who can't phone in their roll call votes. But just as Sen. Sam Brownback tested Kansans' patience with his excessive absenteeism while running for president last year, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has been overdoing the out-of-state travel on behalf of Barack Obama's campaign. Don't take our word for it. Or the predictable scolding of the Kansas Republican Party. Rasmussen Reports polling suggests that the public has been paying attention, too. In May, 56 percent of Kansans surveyed rated Sebelius' performance as good or excellent. In September — after being vetted as a potential running mate, mocking John McCain's home ownership at the Democratic convention and doing more high-profile politicking for Obama — that rating had slipped to 52 percent. And the newest Rasmussen poll has only 45 percent calling Sebelius' performance good or excellent. That's a significant drop for a governor accustomed to SurveyUSA approval rates averaging 65 percent. ... It isn't just the time away from Topeka that's a concern for many Kansans. It's also Sebelius' newly unabashed partisanship, which clashes with the best of her six-year record as a Democratic governor of a heavily Republican state. ... It's true that electronic communications can enable people to do long-distance work effectively. And it will all be over soon. But it's natural for Kansans to feel slighted by Sebelius' travel schedule, and to wonder whether her top priority is Kansas. — *The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press*

Where to write, call

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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715, Fax (202) 225-5124
State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com
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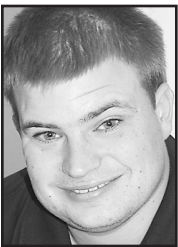
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Couldn't we agree on something?



Andy Heintz

• Wildcat Ramblings

If there is one thing we human beings seem to lack, it's the ability to be objective. We seem to cling to absolutist beliefs even when confronted with incontrovertible evidence that these views are flawed. I believe the two major political parties have been and continue to be weakened due to the absolutist beliefs of some of their supporters. Today, the three major issues polarizing our country are economic problems, religion's role in government and foreign policy. The Democrats generally believe that the government should manage things to make sure poor and middle class Americans don't get left behind in today's globalized economy. The majority of the left is also against religion playing any role in government decision making. Many on the left are skeptical of American foreign policy. After the Vietnam War, Iran-Contra, the CIA backed overthrows of democratically elected presidents in Iran (1954), Guatemala (1953) and Chile (1973), and our government's embrace of dictators such as Fernando Marcos of the Philippines, Papa Doc Duvalier in Haiti, and the Reagan administrations embrace of Saddam Hussein throughout the 1980s, many on the left have given up on the idea that the America ever conducts its foreign policy for humanitarian reasons. Republicans, on the other hand, are skeptical of government intervention in the economy. Many conservatives feel the economy would run much smoother if the government would just get out of the way. Republicans seem divided when it comes to what role religion, or Christianity, should play in crafting government policies. Traditional Barry Goldwater Republicans are uncomfortable with the idea of mixing religion and politics, but the so-called religious right seems intent on injecting its version of Christianity into the political process. Republicans are much more trusting of the government than Democrats when it comes to foreign policy. They point to legitimate humanitarian intervention into countries like Serbia, Bosnia and Somalia to show that U.S. foreign policy has been used to provide freedom to suffering people in other countries. Despite the difference, I believe, if we put our minds to it, we can not only have dialogue free of the usual closed mindedness, but we can reach common ground on a few issues.

For example most Democrats would admit that some government programs are not working and most Republicans would concede that there are times when the government needs to help Americans struggling in this global economy. When it comes to religion's role in the government, conservatives need to quit catering to the Pat Robertsons of the world, while certain sectors of the left need to quit looking down on people with conservative religious beliefs. Both parties have too many supporters who hold simplistic views about U.S. foreign policy. Some Democrats needs to quit viewing all U.S. foreign policies as imperialistic adventures, and conservatives need to quit confusing patriotism with blind nationalism. The United States is one of the only countries that will send troops overseas for humanitarian reasons. This is something we should all be proud of. But we should also understand that national security and economic interests like access to markets and natural resources like oil will always be more important to U.S. politicians than human rights. Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.

Coach involved in mudslinging?

To the Editor:
I am writing in regard to the upcoming election for sheriff in Thomas County. I have lived and worked all my life in rural Kansas and rural America, for many reasons, one being that rural has meant that all the controversies that are a part of the "urban" world have not seemed to infiltrate to the degree that the rest of the country deals with on a daily basis. As one watches the national news and sees the degree of unfriendly campaigning done by Obama and McCain, one sees the kind of misinterpretations that can be a part of campaigning when "mudslinging" is present. Now, we have it in our own backyards, the mudslinging that seems to be going along with the race for Thomas County sheriff. Each of us is allowed our personal opinions and the opportunity to express those in accordance with "free speech." However, I am a bit concerned when "free speech" presents itself in a manner that has occurred in comments and ads by a local man, Colby Community College wrestling coach Steve Lampe. Coach Lampe, holding a position such as he does in the Colby community, automatically has the prestige that the entire community looks up to. I say this because in such a position, one need not be so public with personal feelings and convictions, if you are thinking of the community as a whole. Actually, isn't the welfare for the community the main concern of all the responsible voters?

Rod McFee, Colby

Letter Drop

• Our Readers Sound Off

A man of integrity

To the Editor:
Character matters!
I have known Mike Baughn for several years. Mike has always treated me with respect and courtesy. I know the challenges of

delegating time, and sometimes it is difficult to fit all requirements needed in a day into an appropriate schedule. Mike has always taken the time to answer any questions I have to my satisfaction, not his. This means a lot. We can count on Mike's dedication. Mike Baughn is an honest man that will give an answer you can trust. Mike is dedicated to the citizens of Thomas County and will meet all the challenges required as our sheriff. Mike's history to the dedication of public service for Thomas County speaks for itself. Mike Baughn is a man with high moral standards that we can count on. Mike would never be negative towards someone or use his position to gain an advantage in any situation. We can count on Mike's responses as fair and impartial. Mike Baughn is a highly educated man. Mike uses his education, training and expertise to bring integrity to the sheriff's office, the same integrity he requires of himself. Citizens can depend on this integrity Mike brings to Thomas County as well as northwest Kansas. Write in Mike Baughn for our sheriff. Rod Redenbeck, Colby

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

