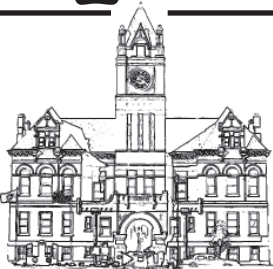




# Opinion



## Other Viewpoints

### Financial skills benefit teachers too

Preparing their students for a few test questions on personal finance shouldn't be an undue burden for Kansas teachers. The state Board of Education already is charged with developing objectives for personal financial literacy, but there is no requirement that personal finance questions be included on state assessment tests. A bill unanimously approved in the Kansas Senate and awaiting action in a House committee would add that requirement beginning in July 2012.

It seems like a reasonable request, but the legislation (SB 84) drew formal opposition from two groups: the Kansas National Education Association, the state's main teachers' union, and the Kansas Community Financial Services Association.

It's understandable that teachers would be hesitant to add anything to the state assessment standards, which every student is expected to meet. There is a certain irony, however, in a teachers' representative asserting that now, during a budget crisis, is not the time to make sure students are taught more about personal finance. Perhaps if more people understood such things as the consequences of credit card debt or adjustable-rate mortgages, at least some of the current economic crisis might be averted....

The bill that passed the Senate doesn't make a personal finance course a high school graduation requirement. It would only require schools to teach basic finance, things like how to manage credit, save money and create a budget. These are life skills that all young people should have and apparently don't always gain through their parents or other adults in their lives.

Including a few appropriate questions on state tests will make sure personal finance is a part of the school curriculum, perhaps as a unit in a required math class. It might be the most practical information many students take with them when they leave the classroom.

— The Lawrence Journal-World, via the Associated Press

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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 or 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: [jmorrison@ink.org](mailto:jmorrison@ink.org) web: [www.morrisonfamily.com](http://www.morrisonfamily.com)
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 [ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us](mailto:ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us)

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail [s.haynes@nwkansas.com](mailto:s.haynes@nwkansas.com) or [colby.editor@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwkansas.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

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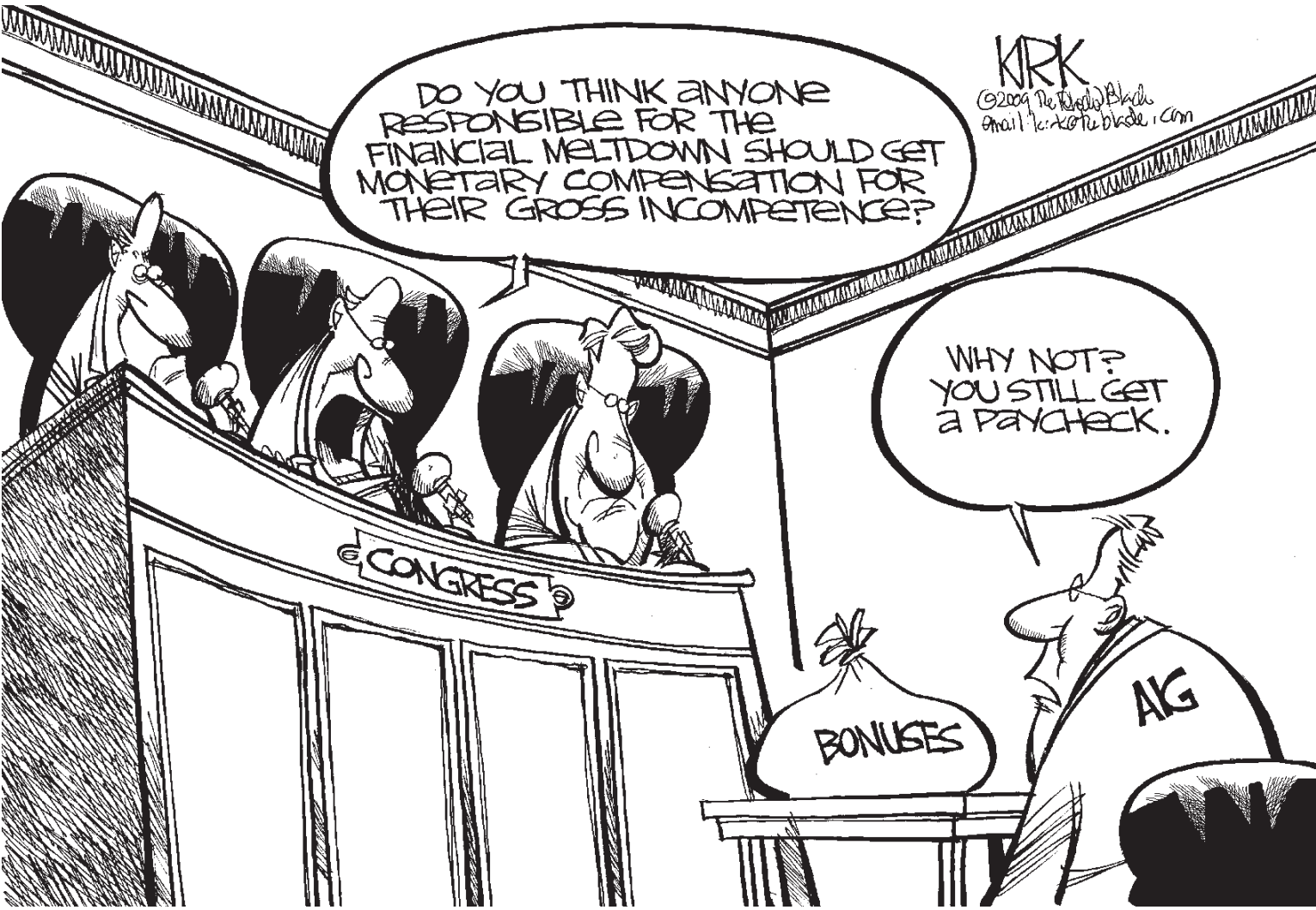
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## Freedom is in the eye of the beholder

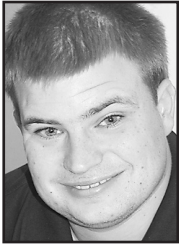
Freedom is a word that evokes strong emotions in people.

American presidents constantly talk about our country's dedication to freedom and libertarians proselytize about the wonders of the free market and the oppressiveness of the tax system. But the truth of the matter is freedom means different things to different people.

This should come as no surprise, given the diversity of the human species. But most definitions of freedom impinge on the freedom of others. For example, if a pharmaceutical company is free to charge the market price for a life-saving medicine, it will drastically undercut a person from a poorer country's freedom to provide for his or her family or even stay alive. The question we should ask ourselves is, does the freedom of a company to set the price for its medicines override thousands of people's freedom to achieve a decent standard of living? An even better question would be, does the international community or a government have the right to betray other people's freedom from interference in their lives in order to redistribute wealth in a way that would give other people the freedom to live an epidemic-free life?

"Few in the developing world can afford drugs at the monopoly prices that Western pharmaceutical companies—prices that are of often many times higher than the costs of production," said Nobel-prize winning author and economist Joseph E. Stiglitz. "To an economist this disparity between price and production cost is simply an economic inefficiency; to an individual with AIDS or some other life-threatening disease it is a matter of life and death."

Here's another example. Since Americans have generally accepted the idea that we are



### Andy Heintz

- Wildcat Ramblings

"free" to mine and extract 25 percent of the earth's natural resources while consuming more per person than any country on earth, even though we only represent 5 percent of the world's population, it would only be fair that the people in China would be allowed to consume the same amount of energy per person as Americans. Of course, if the Chinese decide to do this the results for the world would be catastrophic. We could kiss the rest of world's forests and oil reserves goodbye. Would the collapse of civilization be worth upholding the individual freedoms of the Chinese?

But given the drastic consequences that would result from other countries following our example of over-consumption, will America be willing give up our "freedom" to use 25 percent of the world's resources in order to provide a good example for the growing economies in India and China, or will we clasp our hands together and pray that these countries will figure out a more energy-efficient lifestyle that does not involve the extraction of gigantic chunks of the world's natural resources.

The Cold War was another example of how freedom means different things to different people. In the mainstream media it was portrayed as the evil Soviet empire against the freedom-loving United States. Before I go any further I want to make clear that this is no way meant to be sympathetic to the Soviet Union.

The death of the Evil Empire was a godsend to people on every corner of the planet.

But the fact that America's Central Intelligence Agency backed coups that overthrew democratically elected leaders in Guatemala, Chile, British Guyana, Iran, and Brazil during the Cold War shouldn't be expunged from the history books just because it makes us feel uncomfortable. The CIA also actively worked to subvert elections in Japan and Italy by bribing officials and backing fascists to make sure they didn't elect communist governments, and the United States Army was sent to help the Dominican Republic's Army crush an uprising in 1965 that demanded Juan Bosch, a democratically elected president who had been overthrown by his own army in a coup; be returned to power because our government felt the uprising had communist leanings.

These actions should lead to an important question regarding freedom. Did the United States' right to protect its version of freedom override the right of other countries to freely elect their own leaders without having to worry about outside interference by a foreign power?

The point of this article is to show that there are many different ways to define freedom. Since no one has a monopoly over what the word means, it would be rational to refer to complex issues as a battle between two competing views of freedom. On just about every major issue someone's definition of freedom will be breached. It's up to us to carefully scrutinize each situation and decide which definition of freedom should triumph.

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.

## Stem cell research debate is back

According to media reports, President Obama intends to sign an executive order to undo a President Bush administrative policy, in place since 2001, and lift the restriction on federal money for embryonic stem cell research.

This is sure to create concern from pro-life groups and legislators.

President Obama's decision will allow researchers to harvest stem cells from human embryos at taxpayer expense. This process is not only ethically wrong, but troubling, to say the least, that taxpayer dollars will be used for this kind of research.

Dr. David Prentice, a leading stem cell researcher, claims that adult stem cells have been used to treat a variety of maladies, including Parkinson's disease, Crohn's Disease, and various heart conditions. Another evolu-



### Ralph Ostmeyer

- State Senator

tion in stem cell research, in which skin cells are genetically modified to create iPS cells that mimic embryonic stem cells, is also proving to have practical life-saving benefits. Adult stem cells have proven effective in thousands of cases, and they are demonstrating their promise in real clinical settings.

Cheryl Sulleuger, spokesperson for Operation Rescue said, "It's wrong to experiment on humans, no matter their age. We've been pro-

testing embryonic stem cell research since the 1990s, when most people didn't even know what stem cells were, and we praised President Bush when he put that restriction in place."

I find it particularly troubling that, given the economic crisis of our country, taxpayer dollars would be used to support research that destroys human life. Those of us who believe that life begins at conception should also be concerned about this. Tax dollars should be spent to build our country, not aid in destroying generations to come.

Please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached by writing to Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Street, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kansas, 66612 or call (785) 296-7399. My e-mail address is [ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov](mailto:ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov).

### Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

