



## Free Press Viewpoint

### Mandates hurt while trying to help

Experts say the economy is fragile, but the recovery is under way. We hope so, but with unemployment approaching 11 percent, you have to wonder if this recovery will include many jobs.

October unemployment was 10.2 percent, highest in more than a quarter century, while the rate among teenagers was a whopping 27.6 percent.

And those figures are liable to get worse before they get better, especially if Congress insists on saddling employers with huge costs for a new health-care plan.

Much of the current problem can be traced to government "mandates" about employment, and that's especially true for the teenage depression.

Teenagers are not an employer's first pick for any job because they have no skills or experience. Couple that with the worst recession in half a century and an ideology-driven series of increases in the minimum wage, and you have a perfect storm for teens who need some income.

Here's how the Labor Law Center put it, referring to job prospects after the last increase in the minimum in July:

"For unemployed teen workers, job prospects look grim. In June, the U.S. Department of Labor reported a 24 percent teen unemployment rate, further adding to the uphill battle teens face when seeking employment."

Supposedly, that's not what Congress intended when it passed a three-year phased increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25. But the result is, employers faced with an artificial minimum have to focus on hiring fewer and better workers.

It's no wonder unemployment is so high right now: it's not just the recession, it's the government. And teens, with the lack of experience, get hit twice as hard.

Then, if Congress makes having employees even more expensive, companies will be able to afford even fewer of them. It's not a question of ideology, but of what you can afford.

One version of the House health-care proposal — and who knows if it's still in the bill — would require employers to provide health coverage for all full- and part-time workers. That gives them a choice: buy two health-care policies for two part-timers, or just one for a full-time worker.

Hum, that's a tough one. How many part-time workers would be out of work in a matter of days. It's simple arithmetic.

That's what happens when we follow our hearts and not our logic. Some might even argue that it's OK to jettison teens and part-time workers for the greater good, but those people are neither teens nor part-timers.

The recession is bad and getting worse? Unemployment headed for record rates? And for teens, rates equal to 1930s unemployment?

Gee, wonder who's to blame? Congress? You guessed it.

— Steve Haynes



### Potluck cooking hits many snags

It was a church-food weekend. Steve's church had a potluck Sunday after church, and my parish was holding a soup supper Sunday evening. Could I provide an appetizer for one and a cake for the other, please?

Sure, why not. I love to cook.

I decided on BLT bites for the appetizer. They always go over well, and I'm never stuck with any leftovers. Besides I still had most of a package of cherry tomatoes from a previous recipe. I had most of the other ingredients — green onions, a pound of bacon and parmesan cheese. All I needed was more tomatoes and parsley.

At the grocery on Saturday, I picked up another box of tiny tomatoes, a German chocolate cake mix and a can of coconut-pecan frosting. However, the parsley bin was bare.

I called Steve, who was out of town, and told him to hit the store there and get the missing ingredient.

Then I went home and started to prepare the goodies.

While I was frying the bacon, I put the cake on to bake and started cutting the tops off and taking the insides out of about 30 cherry tomatoes.

By the time the bacon was done, I had the tomatoes cleaned and laid out on a fresh paper towel ready for stuffing Sunday morning.

The bacon went in the fridge and I took the cake out of the oven.

It was crooked. I had made it in a nine-inch-by-13-inch pan, and one side was twice as high as the other.

A quick check of the pan showed that it was



**Cynthia Haynes**

• Open Season

warped and so was my cake.

The grocery was closed, and I was stuck. Sunday morning, I finished the BLT bites before leaving for church. After mixing the ingredients together and stuffing my pre-cleaned tomatoes, I realized I had more stuffing than tomatoes. It was getting a little late to run to the grocery again, so I checked the tomatoes in the basement. You know, the green ones you pick just before the big freeze and cover with newspaper to ripen. I was able to come up with just enough small ones to finish off the stuffing — much to Steve's sorrow. He loves the stuffing just the way it is.

The BLT bites were a popular item, and again I had no leftovers.

Back at home Sunday afternoon, I frosted my crooked cake and picked spinach for supper.

I had planted the spinach in July, and while it isn't growing as well as it does in the spring, I thought I had enough to make a couple of salads for our supper.

But it was work. With all the leaves off the trees, I had to pick each spinach leaf separately. It seemed to take forever, and I by the time I got enough for supper, I was down to pick-

ing leaves the size of my thumbnail. We had enough, but just barely.

I delivered my cake to the church basement and remembered the soup supper. So after spending forever on my knees picking spinach, we ended up having chili and chicken-noodle soup for supper. It was delicious, and the cake had been cut into dozens of pieces — some a little taller than others, but you had to know what to look for to notice.

And I guess I don't have to plan at least one supper this week. I've got a bag of home-grown spinach.

For those interested, here is the recipe for BLT bites from *The Taste of Home* magazine:

- 16-20 cherry tomatoes.
- 1 pound of bacon, fried and crumbled.
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing.
- 1/3 cup chopped green onions.
- 3 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese.
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh parsley.
- Cut a thin slice off of each tomato top. Scoop out and discard pulp. Invert the tomatoes on a paper towel to drain. In a small bowl, combine all remaining ingredients, mix well. Spoon into tomatoes. Refrigerate for several hours. (Maybe we just have smaller cherry tomatoes around here, but I always need 30 to 40.)

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at [c.haynes@nwkans.com](mailto:c.haynes@nwkans.com)

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### Supporting veterans a Kansas tradition

Today we observe Veterans Day to honor those who have served our country in the military and protected our way of life.

Kansans can be proud that our state has a long history of supporting our country's veterans in gratitude for their service. These stories have and will continue to inspire people of our state, and nation, to do great things for those who sacrifice on our behalf.

The Veterans Day holiday was founded by one of Kansas' own. Alvin King of Emporia proposed that Armistice Day be changed to recognize and honor veterans from all wars and conflicts, not just World War I. Kansas



**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**

• Capitol Notes

Congressman Ed Rees introduced a bill creating the holiday. In 1954, President Eisenhower, a native of Abilene and one of the most admired military leaders in our history, signed the legislation proclaiming Veterans Day.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ARCHIVE  
President Eisenhower signing H.R. 7786, changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day, in 1954. Kansans at the signing who backed the bill included (from left) Alvin J. King, Wayne Richards, Arthur J. Connell, John T. Nation, Edward Rees, Richard L. Trombla and Howard W. Watts.

In December 1943, a Topekan crafted the Servicemen's Readjustment Act — also known as the GI Bill of Rights. Harry Colmery, a lawyer and past national commander of the American Legion, wrote this first GI Bill, which forever changed American history.

Over 60 years later I was honored, as a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to continue Colmery's mission by supporting a "21st Century GI Bill," providing enhanced education benefits to

veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

More recently, in 2005, a group of American Legion Riders from Mulvane was the first to respond to hateful demonstrations taking place at U.S. service members' funerals. These members of the "Patriot Guard" shielded military families from protesters, leading to a nationwide movement that has allowed grieving families the peaceful time of mourning they deserve.

Our state's honorable tradition continues in present time. One example is retired Army Col. Gary LaGrange of Manhattan, who created "Help us Learn... Give us Hope" ([www.helpuslearngiveushope.org](http://www.helpuslearngiveushope.org)). This organization collects and sends school supplies, including books, to U.S. service members who distribute them to Iraqi and Afghan school children.

First requested by a "Big Red One" 1st Infantry Division soldier in Baghdad in 2008, this program has grown. To date, over 260,000 pounds of educational materials have been collected from Kansans and sent overseas. Illiteracy rates as high as 90 percent among Afghan women threaten the future of these countries and our mission there. "Help us Learn... Give us Hope" is making a difference in winning hearts and minds while helping children toward a brighter future.

King, Colmery, the Patriot Guard, and LaGrange are just a few examples of many etched in our Kansas history that have shaped our country's gratitude for American veterans. May we continue to support our veterans and the thousands now serving in uniform who work each day to secure our country and our freedoms.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

