



Free Press Viewpoint

Tax loophole to close into noose?

A Kansas House committee took up part of the plan to “close loopholes” in the state sales tax last week, a bill that would raise \$182 million for the cash-strapped state and maybe stave off further cuts in the coming year.

And what loophole would the bill close to work its wonders?

Yours, of course.

Most of the money would come from eliminating the exemption for residential utility bills – water, sewer, electric and gas – now enjoyed by Kansas citizens. That means every time you get that irritatingly high January gas bill, or the soaring July electric charge, you’d get to pay 5.3 per cent more to help pay the state’s bills.

Does anyone think this will fly?

But the Legislature has already been beaten up by the Girl Scouts and the Cancer Society, who complained bitterly when someone suggested they should lose the exemptions they got from the Legislature in better times. The Cancer Society said it would lose thousands now spent on research and aid if it has to pay sales tax on its purchases.

Rep. John Faber pointed out in Oberlin last week, the state probably could solve all its money problems by ending one huge tax exemption – the one farmers get on equipment they buy. With a combine priced at well over \$300,000 these days, that’s about \$16,000 of hurt a whack, maybe more.

Quickly, you might ask yourself, who has better lobbyists in Topeka, the Farm Bureau, or you?

Then, you know who will win if push comes to shove.

“Besides, I don’t think I could vote for that,” said Rep. Faber, a farmer, with a grin.

Tax law is largely a matter of whose ox is being gored, it seems, and who has the bigger stick when the infighting starts. And every tax break has someone who reaps its rewards.

The farmers have their tax breaks, to be sure. Businesses have theirs, an exemption on machinery and equipment. You even have yours, on utilities.

That may be why Gov. Mark Parkinson suggested a temporary 1 percent increase in the sales tax. That way, at least everybody (but the Girl Scouts, the Cancer Society and your church) gets to share the pain.

But with record numbers of Kansans out of work, with layoffs common and many families making less every year, can people afford any tax increase this year?

It’s a good question. By and large, those who spend tax money feel we can. Many who pay taxes are not so sure.

Schools, services for the handicapped, medical care, hospitals and doctors, roads, colleges, all are important. All have suffered unreasonable cuts. But so has the average Kansas family.

The budget will get worked out. Life will go on. Kansas will have both schools and farms 10 years from now.

But not before the big fighting coming up next month on whose ox will be gored and whose exemptions will live to see another day. We all need to pay close attention, because we all have a stake in this game. — *Steve Haynes*

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 colby.editor@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

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OBVIOUSLY, THIS WAS THE ACT OF A RIGHT-WING ANTI-GOVERNMENT TEA PARTY NUT!

NO, NO—HE ALSO SEETHED AT BIG BUSINESS! CLEARLY A LEFT-WING LOONEY SOCIALIST!

AHEM—IS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO ASSIGN THIS VIOLENT PERPETRATOR A POLITICAL IDENTITY?!



HIGH SUNDAY TELEGRAM

New diet leaves out more than it includes

I’m trying a new diet, and it’s driving me nuts.

I’ve been suffering from an embarrassing gas problem and it has nothing to do with my car.

For some reason, I have had a problem with the sudden, unexpected release of noxious, noisy, smelly clouds of intestinal gas.

I’ve tried several remedies for this, and so far none has helped, so I’m trying to remove the problem at the source. I’m trying to get rid of all the yeast in my system so that I can repopulate my innards with “good” bugs that won’t cause such embarrassment.

The first part of the process is to remove all yeast from my diet, and that’s not as simple as it sounds.

Bread is the first thing that comes to mind. No bread for a month. No toast. No bagels. No sandwiches. No hamburgers. No nothing with bread. Even saltine crackers have some yeast in them. Tortillas, I’ve learned, don’t. But I get tired of them.

Alcoholic drinks like beer, wine and whiskey



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

are out. What makes alcohol? Right, yeast.

Well, that one’s not so hard. I prefer Diet Coke to Bud Light, and although I enjoy a glass of wine now and then. I can live without it.

The really hard one is vinegar. Remember what happens to wine when it’s left out too long? It turns to vinegar. Yeast is integral in the manufacture of both wine and vinegar.

And what has vinegar in it — about two-thirds of the stuff I like to eat, that’s all.

There’s catsup, mustard, barbecue sauce, pickles, salad dressings and even mayonnaise. So, let’s try to enjoy a nice meal.

Have a salad but no dressing. Not even

those spray-on ones. Steak is OK but no A1 or Worcestershire or 57 sauce. You can have a hamburger but no bun or condiments. (I don’t like pickles anyway.)

Want to go out for barbecue? No, thank you.

How about Chinese? Nope, I think soy sauce has yeast in it.

Mexican? OK. Hamburger, soft cheese, rice and beans on tortillas, lettuce and tomatoes — but no chips or salsa.

I finally found a book that gives you a list of things that people with yeast allergies shouldn’t eat. It includes fruit.

Fruit! That’s one of my favorite foods.

No fresh, frozen or canned fruit.

This is going to be a long month, but maybe I’ll lose weight as well as that less dignified problem.

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@nwkansas.com

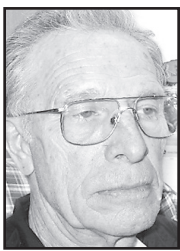
Who’s left to be accountable?

The Justice Department concluded in a report released Friday that the lawyers who gave legal justification to the Bush administration’s brutal interrogation tactics for terrorism suspects used flawed legal reasoning but were not guilty of professional misconduct.

In other words, the end justifies the means. If it is legal, you have no moral or ethical reason not to proceed. If it is illegal, you still have no moral or ethical reason not to proceed, if you are willing to risk getting caught or choose to ignore the law, based on your group’s opinion.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and the moral and ethical consequences to society be damned. That leaves nobody, from the county jails to the federal maximum security prisons, even the battlefield prison compounds, accountable for abuse and misconduct.

If all of this does not constitute professional misconduct, then perhaps we need to redefine professional conduct. Perhaps we need to question our religious leaders, who seem to



Ken Poland

• Ken’s World

pick and choose when to ignore Jesus’ words in the New Testament and when not to.

It seems to me I’ve read several times where Jesus said, “You have heard — —”, but I say, “— — —”. We need to read Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew chapter 5, especially verses 38 through 48.

Through out His ministry, Jesus made some serious criticism of the religious leaders and their ability to weasel out of strict adherence to the Mosaic Laws. He didn’t refute the veracity of the law. He refuted how the law was interpreted and enforced. He demonstrated that man should lean toward compassion and for-

giveness and to leave the final judgment and punishment to God.

Most of the above is criticizing our claims of being a Christian nation. However, nearly all world religions have the Golden Rule in their ethical code. The problem seems to be, all the world religions, including Christianity, have to deal with man’s greed and lust for power.

Man has the ability to pick and choose who the “others” are, and it seems, the others who deserve ethical treatment seem to be those who honor “my” position of authority.

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and tit for tat has perpetuated bloody revenge. Should we as a Christian nation continue down that dead-end street?

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rwinc@cheerful.com.

School applauded for sportsmanship

To the Editor:

Our school received the following letter from a parent and public official at the school where we played. Our boys defeated theirs by 50-some points, their girls beat ours by 9.



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

Dear Students and Staff at Heartland:

My name is Mark Scott and I am the proud parent of six children who attend Plainview School in Sheridan Lake, Colo. I wanted to take a brief amount of your time to tell you what a wonderful group of young men and women that you have in your students. I do not believe that I have seen a group of individuals who were so respectful, nice, and polite as your kids were last night here at Plainview.

Undoubtedly, the teachings and directions that you are providing these young people are certainly reflected in their actions and you and they should be commended. My eldest son, a freshman, told me last night after the games

that although he was disappointed in their loss, he felt that he probably learned more about competition, respect and doing the right things during the game last night than in any other game they have played all year.

As you are aware, our boys team is very inexperienced. They have been ridiculed and insulted by other teams and coaches throughout the year, and although at times this can be a motivational factor to work for improvement, most of the time it has absolutely no benefit

to these young persons. I just think it was a blessing that Plainview had the opportunity to host your school last night, and again I want to thank your school and your students for showing our kids the true meaning of competition, commitment and respect.

Keep up the good work and best wishes in the remainder of the year.

Mark Scott
Kiowa County administrator

There are many good things going on in Colby, and most make the paper, but there are things you have no way to know about. I know you like to inform the public, and thought I’d give you the opportunity to do that.

I hope it blesses you and our town to hear about the positive impact high school students can have as they interact with their peers in competition around the area.

Melissa Regier, Colby

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

