

## Other Viewpoints

### Commerce groups split with state over tax increases

A number of local Kansas chambers of commerce are challenging the statewide chamber's stand on how best to support Kansas business.

A growing disconnect between the Kansas Chamber and many local chambers of commerce around the state has produced an interesting split message to Kansas legislators.

Although the state chamber has vehemently opposed any and all proposals for increased state taxes to deal with the current budget crisis, a group of 14 local chambers stepped up this week to say they would accept "rational" tax increases if it means the state could avoid damaging cuts to schools, higher education and transportation.

The action of the local chambers drew a strong, and somewhat arrogant, response from Kent Eckles, a state chamber vice president. "When chambers pull these kinds of stunts, it's a huge boon for us," he said. "People who signed onto this letter clearly do not represent their business communities."

How can he be so sure? Why does he think he knows the will of the local business people in those 14 communities better than the local chambers do?

The core mission of any chamber of commerce is to support and promote business, but opinions differ on how best to do that. According to the state chamber, any kind of tax increase hurts business and should be vigorously opposed, period.

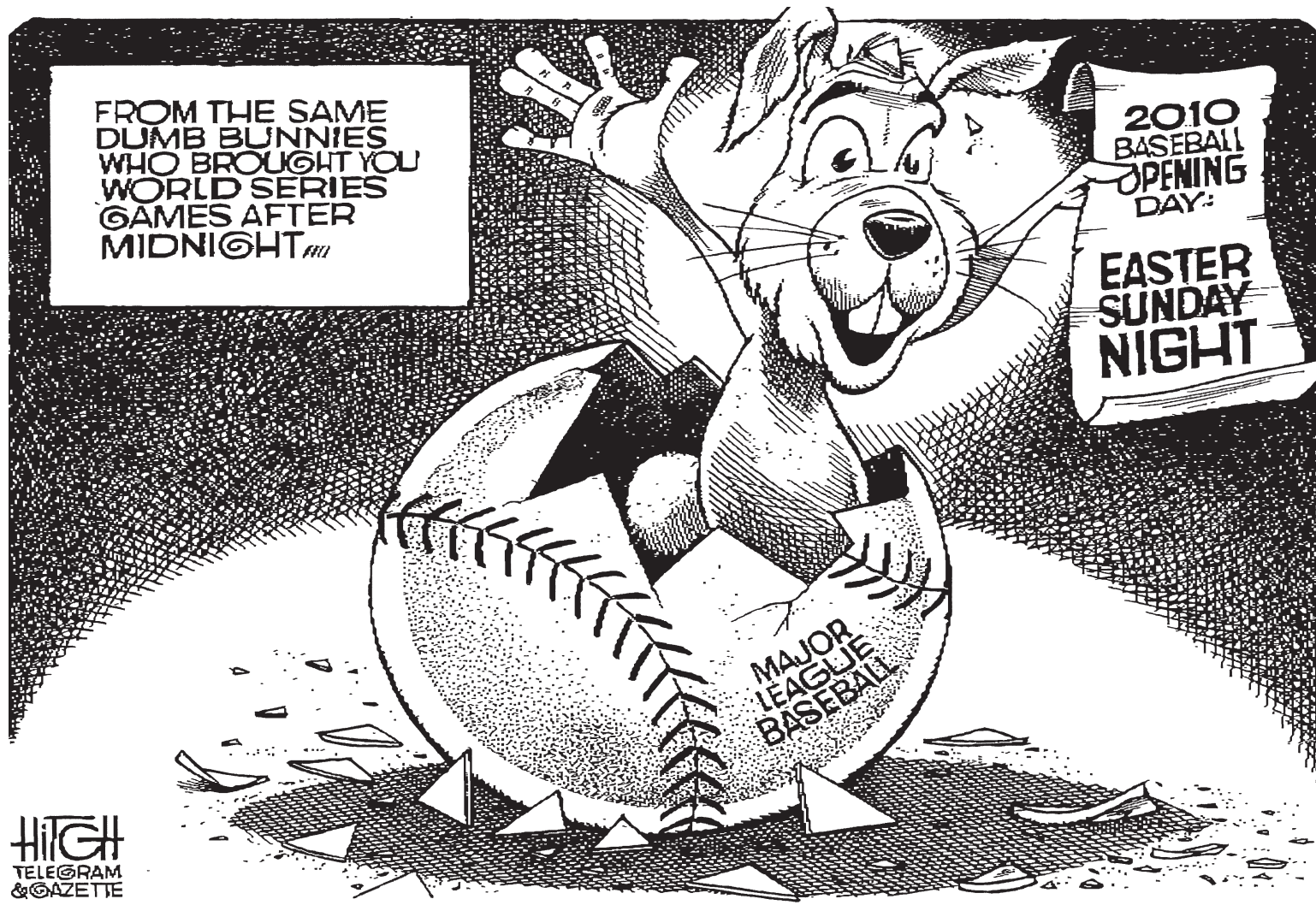
That may work for the state chamber, but local chambers tend to take a broader view. They look at their communities and see how important it is to have highways to serve businesses and good schools to train future employees and provide a strong quality of life that will attract new businesses.

Several of the communities also are the homes of community colleges or state universities, so they value higher education. Those schools, their employees and students support many small businesses in those communities and provide many jobs.

Lawrence, of course, is one of those but wasn't among the 14 chambers that signed onto the tax letter. Local chamber officials said the letter was too general and they haven't decided whether to support a state tax increase. Their caution may be prudent, but, like the other towns they should carefully weigh the benefits of tax proposals against the consequences of cuts that would occur without those taxes.

There's more than one way to support business in Kansas. At least 14 Kansas communities think the statewide chamber's hard-line anti-tax stand takes too narrow a view. The fact that they feel strongly enough to put their names on a letter challenging that view might warrant more than a knee-jerk dismissal from Kansas Chamber leaders.

— Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press



### Granddaughter brings back memories

She's so tiny. Miniature fingers and toes, with sharp little nails.

A head you can hold in your palm, a rear that fits in the other, just made to be held.

I think I remember now, though it's been nearly 36 years, the evening after, when the nurse brought our daughter from the nursery to the room. It was the first time we'd had a chance to get to know her, even though Cynthia lay exhausted from 14 hours of labor.

She, too, was tiny, with lots of fine chestnut hair, but a perfectly formed head from what may have been the last natural breech birth in Kansas City.

We looked at her in wonder then, and got ready to take her home and get to know her. It was the start of that strange and wonderful trip we call parenting. I know I wouldn't trade it for anything, for over those 36 years, Cynthia and I have been blessed.

I'm sure many people feel the same. There's something special about those we bring into this world and attempt to guide through the signposts of life.

And parenting has never lost its luster. Family is still the source of much joy and wonder, along with some pain and now and then, sorrow.

Now, though, it's something new. We're grandparents.



**Steve Haynes**

• Along the Sappa

That tiny bundle breathing and stretching and making little noises, and OK, sometimes wailing her little head off — she's not ours to raise. We're just visitors, here to help out for a while until Brad's folks come for their turn.

We've been holding and watching and changing diapers, of course. And we've cooked dinner, done the dishes, cleaned up the house, weeded the garden and the lawn, planted hydrangea and blueberries, raked up gum-tree balls.

Her parents are the ones who have to change their entire lives and stay up all night and sleep when they can, get the blues (or console) and generally deal with a miniature hurricane bent on disrupting their days.

But she's special to us in a way that, I think, is hard for younger generations to understand. She's theirs, but in our hearts, just as they are ours, so is she. We waited for her and her future mates. Now is our time.

Parents may not understand this at first. I

don't think I understood it at all when I first became a parent. You know your folks will love your kids, want to spoil them, disapprove of your child rearing, and give you headway to make all the mistakes they made themselves.

It wasn't until my mother was gone that I really understood how special grandchildren can be. When we went that day to clean out her house, I started looking around. She had 10 grandchildren by the four of us, and they were on every square foot of every wall. She'd been widowed in her 50s, and in many ways, they were her life.

Those pictures had been collected and hung with care. Right then, I realized, I'd probably never sent enough. No one had.

Nor was she unique. Her sister's house, finally empty, held the same treasure — photo on photo of three grandsons and their six offspring.

It's nothing unusual. It's the way of the world. Maybe it's always been that way.

So now she's here, and now we can feel that in our hearts. Just looking at her, the cares of the world melt away for a while.

It's a good feeling. Well worth waiting for.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

### Words have power for the powerful

I received e-mail discussing this subject: "Words have meanings and politicians who want to control your life know that."

The text of the message addressed the fact that the switch from using "global warming" to "climate change" was not a coincidence. Well, duh!

Words were invented because sign language was rather limiting in carrying on a conversation. The switch from using "global warming" to "climate change" was not a coincidence. Whether you call it global warming, climate change, environmental activism, smog, or whatever else you think of is not the issue that needs to be addressed.

I grew up knowing that when they said we were going to have thunderstorms, we would have a dirt storm first. Do you not think that farming practices had changed our environment?

When I was young, farming practices had not substantially changed since the dirt storms of the 1910-1911 era. Should we have pooped those who said we needed to alter our farming methods?

People who lived in highly industrialized area couldn't hang their laundry outside if they didn't want it all to turn to a dismal gray color. Do you think the smokestacks belching black coal smoke weren't changing the environment?

Do you think acid rain is someone's imagination? Do you think the throat-burning and eye-itching sensations you have in congested traffic are just your imagination or merely irritation over delay in getting where you want to be?

Do you think man has nothing to do with the disappearance of the rain forests? Do you think the demise of rain forests is not going to change the ecology and atmosphere of that area? What about the mushroom clouds and nuclear pollution? Is that not a threat to your



**Ken Poland**

• Ken's World

environment?

Do you honestly think that the combination of all these things cannot in any way effect our global atmosphere?

The Bible does not literally address any of the issues I have listed. Does that mean we Christians can just go merrily along our way and ignore them? Does the commission we are assigned with in Matthew 28:19-20 only command that we get a patent confession of faith from our brothers?

What are all the other things Christ, by his example, revealed to us that we should be concerned about? (verse 20) "Am I my brothers keeper?" And, if I am, should I be concerned about what physical condition I am leaving this world in for the generations of brothers to come?

If you do not claim Christianity, do you have any moral obligation to protect the environment for your children or grandchildren?

Al Gore seems to be the whipping boy for those who disagree with "Global Warming."

Gore, whether you agree with him or not, gets paid by those who invite him to speak. Motivational Christian speakers get paid by those who invite them to speak. Television personalities, Christian or not, collect big bucks for speaking at rallies.

Try getting former President G.W. Bush to come give an address for a meeting. Do you not think he gets a pretty good stipend for his presentation? What he does with that stipend is not the issue. Organize a Tea Party and try

getting Sarah Palin to be your speaker. Do you think she isn't going to go home a little richer than she was before coming?

You are right. Words have meaning and politicians know it. Every successful salesman knows that catchy phrases and words have meaning. Every successful pastor or evangelist knows that words and how they are used are the difference between success and failure.

Declaring that my scientists are smarter than your scientists is a little ridiculous when I don't understand either side's technical knowledge and interpretation.

By the way, you folks who missed the Max Pickrel Lecture on Tuesday, March 9, failed to hear some rather enlightening words concerning bioethics and the pros and cons surrounding "Babies by Design, The Ethics of Genetic Choice."

Whether you like it or not, that technology is available today. What are we going to do with it and how? It has frightening theological ramifications. Are we in the church going to repeat the mistakes of established Christian churches in the past? Can we just excommunicate those scientists and practitioners and hope that settles the issues? Can we justify our approval of genetic engineering through immunization and treatment of diseases after birth and yet deny proven ability to genetically treat diseases before birth?

Where does playing God begin and end?

I'm not quite ready to jump in and start passing laws to control this astonishing ability of man to interfere with the random nature of genetic disposition. But is our theology equipping us to face the world in which we live today?

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