



Other Viewpoints

Is tuition hike really 'affordable?'

The headline on the University of Kansas news release reads: "KU works to make tuition affordable for all students." We realize that state budget cuts have been tough, but it seems that KU needs to work a little harder on that "affordable" tuition goal.

The tuition proposals released by KU this week include plans for a technology "fee" – not tuition increase, but a "fee" – of \$10 per credit hour. The fee is scheduled to help modernize classroom technology, expand wireless Internet access and pay for programs to improve "student retention."

With the new \$10-per-hour fee, incoming freshmen entering into the mandatory four-year "tuition compact" will pay \$262.50 per credit hour, an increase of 7 percent over last year and a whopping 23 percent increase over freshmen who started in 2007. Students already in a tuition compact won't pay the new fee.

The principle of the tuition compacts is questionable. It essentially takes the estimated tuition for four years and splits it equally over the four years, front loading tuition for freshmen and sophomores who may or may not last the entire four years. However, given the current rate of tuition inflation at KU, students who can complete a degree in four years seem to be coming out ahead.

The standard tuition that will be paid by students who didn't come to KU as freshmen will rise by 9.1 percent. Among these students will be those who attended a community college for the first year or two, probably as a way to reduce costs. According to the proposed rates, they will pay \$238.90 per credit hour next fall. All of the proposed increases must be approved by the Kansas Board of Regents.

KU officials say that students are telling them they are willing to pay more to preserve the quality of their university education, but you have to wonder exactly to whom they are talking.

Are they talking to students who are going to school part time and working to try to make ends meet? Are they talking to parents who pay most of the tuition bills? A small representation of students on KU's tuition advisory committee probably doesn't accurately reflect a consensus of the student body about tuition.

All six state universities are proposing tuition increases, but, as usual, KU's is the largest. Kansas State University is proposing a 3 percent increase. It's true that reductions in state funding have been hard on KU this year, but the economic conditions that prompted those cuts also affect the families who are trying to send their children to KU.

Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little said in the news release that KU's tuition proposal "strikes a good balance" between maintaining accessibility to higher education and addressing the university's budget challenges. That may be true, but it's still tough news for Kansans who are trying to balance their budgets while paying tuition for a KU student.

– Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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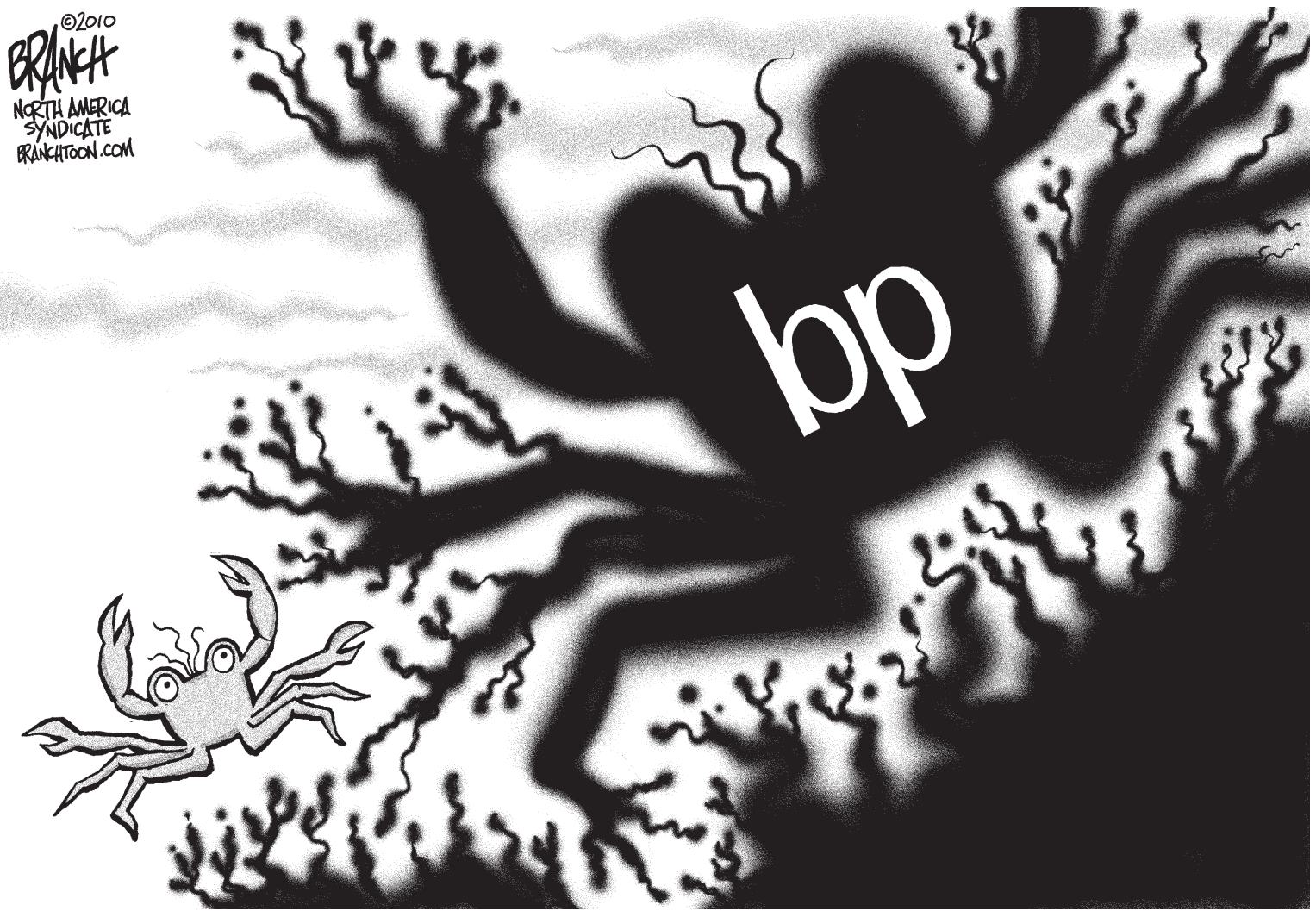
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Immigration crisis hurts everyone

Illegal immigration has once again come to the forefront of American politics, thanks to the stringent and controversial state law passed in Arizona.

The law makes it a state crime – a misdemeanor – for a noncitizen not to have immigration papers. It gives police the right to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally.

It's hard to see how this law won't result in racial profiling of Hispanics. My knee-jerk reaction was to blame the majority of Arizonans who voted for this measure. I suspected that racism had provoked the current outrage about illegal immigration.

After reading "Mexican Standoff" in the April 30 *Newsweek*, however, I think I've been too quick to vilify the people of Arizona. I still don't like the bill; I still think racism is a part of the debate; but I don't think supporting the bill automatically makes someone racist or immoral.

Eve Conant, a writer for *Newsweek*, rode with police and other law-enforcement agents in Arizona for a month last year, and she learned some of the reasons why 70 percent of the people in the state wanted this law.

Conant wrote that she met many scared people on her ride-along. One man lived next to a "drop house" for Mexican workers and slept with two guns under his bed. His children were not allowed to play in their own back yard.

A drop house is where human smugglers keep up to 50 illegal immigrants hidden, sometimes against their will. She wrote that the sound of gunshots was not uncommon.

"Four years ago, this neighborhood was pools and old ladies," said the man, too frightened to give his name. "Now it's absolutely



Andy Heintz

• Wildcat Ramblings

insane." Conant wrote that police raided the drop house that morning and the man's kids were evacuated behind riot shields. He began to cry when he told her the story. Immigrants were taken from the house handcuffed, sweaty and exhausted.

Many proponents of the Arizona law would like people to focus solely on the man and his children, but the workers were in a situation that is just as bad. While I'm against this bill for principled and pragmatic reasons, it would be wrong to ignore the dangers illegal immigration has caused Arizona residents.

That being said, people need to remember that the majority of illegal immigrants are honest, hard-working people just trying to earn a living. Pundits who arrogantly demonize illegal immigrants from air-conditioned buildings make me want throw my television out the window.

The elephant in the room that many seem to be ignoring is the effect the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, American and Canada has had on small farmers in Mexico. Many of those risking their lives to cross our borders are farmers who couldn't compete with the subsidized agricultural products from America that flooded the country once the agreement was signed in 1994.

This shouldn't surprise anyone, because U.S. subsidized products are sold below cost, making them less expensive than products grown by family farmers in Mexico.

Randall Pinkston, a correspondent with CBS News, reported three years ago that entire towns are emptying out because thousands of small farms have gone out of business. As many as 2 million farm workers had lost their jobs and the vast majority headed north across the United States border.

I think one of the most reasonable solutions to illegal immigration is for the United States, Mexico and Canada to work out a new trade agreement that won't leave Mexican farmers in abject poverty. One way to decrease illegal immigration is to give family farmers in Mexico a chance to make a living in their own country. I'm not against trade, but trade can be a disaster for the poorest people if those crafting the deals enact policies that neglect the basic needs of the most vulnerable.

America could decrease its immigration problem by reforming the system so it's not nearly impossible to come here legally. This would be a more reasonable solution than putting up more fences or hiring more people to patrol the border with guns.

One thing is for sure – something needs to be done – quickly – about illegal immigration, because too many people are being denied a chance to earn a decent living for themselves and their families.

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.

... And not a drop to drink

It was the best of weekends, it was the worst of weekends. It was the age of wisdom, it was the Friday our youngest came home from college for the summer. Some of it anyway.

It was also the Saturday the guy who rents our pasture near Selden called up to say the water tank for his cattle was half empty. Since I had been working earlier in the week on the inside pressure storage tank for the house, which also supplies the corral, I just presumed that I hadn't turned the power back on. No problem.

Yeah, right. Drove out Saturday afternoon – power was on, but the pump was not running. Not good.

Checked at the wellhead – had power to the top, but no water. Tried to call someone in Selden who did well work, but since he wasn't listed in the Feist directory, had to call half a dozen people with the same last name to finally find ONE at home who knew the number for the right one. (Don't people in Selden stay home on Saturday? Come to think of it, I wasn't home either.) He said he had just walked into the house after putting in fence all day, but could come out and see what he could discover.

Which was that we had power to the top of the wellhead, but no water....

Oh, and no continuity down inside the well either – which meant either a broken wire (cheaper) somewhere down in the well, or the submersible pump motor (not cheaper) at the bottom had burned out. But since no fuses had blown, a broken wire was more likely.



Evan Barnum

• Slightly Off the Wall

Either way, it was the end of the line for him, since he just did electrical, and didn't have the equipment to pull dozens or hundreds of feet of well pipe out of the ground. I was going to have to get someone else who could. (Really not cheaper.)

The bill for coming out for an hour on a Saturday afternoon to check? Nothing. At least something went nice. (Thanks, Jim J.!)

Sunday was spent putting together a mandatory project that I couldn't work on Saturday. Finished at 3:30 a.m. ZZZZZZZZZ.

Monday, bright (?) and early, called the well and pump company in Hoxie, since the cows would soon be getting thirsty. Sure, they could come out this morning (cha-ching!) as the rain had made roads too muddy to even get to most of the other jobs they had lined up.

At 10:30 a.m. they set up the derrick and started pulling pipe up out of the ground to get to the break, or motor, whichever showed up first. Personally, I was rooting for the wire.

They wanted to know, how far down this well goes??

I dunno, all the way to the bottom, I guess. What's normal around here?

Couple hundred feet. Soon pipe started coming up in 20-foot sections. One section, two, three ... no break in the wire yet ... six, seven, and finally, here's the pump and moto ... ummm, shouldn't there be something at the end of the pipe? Where the heck are the pump and motor???

Looks like it's yet another 30 feet down – somewhere at the bottom of the well. After it fell off the end of the pipe. FELL off!!!! Fell off. Seems that, especially when you make the connection between the pipe and the motor with a plastic adapter, it is harder to keep it screwed on tight for 17 years. After a while, it can just unscrew itself and dive to the bottom of the well.

Where it will remain. You're not going to get it out of the bottom of a 190-foot casing with a fishing pole and 10-pound-test line. By now there's an old song running through my mind. "Dig a little deeper in the well, boys, dig a little deeper...."

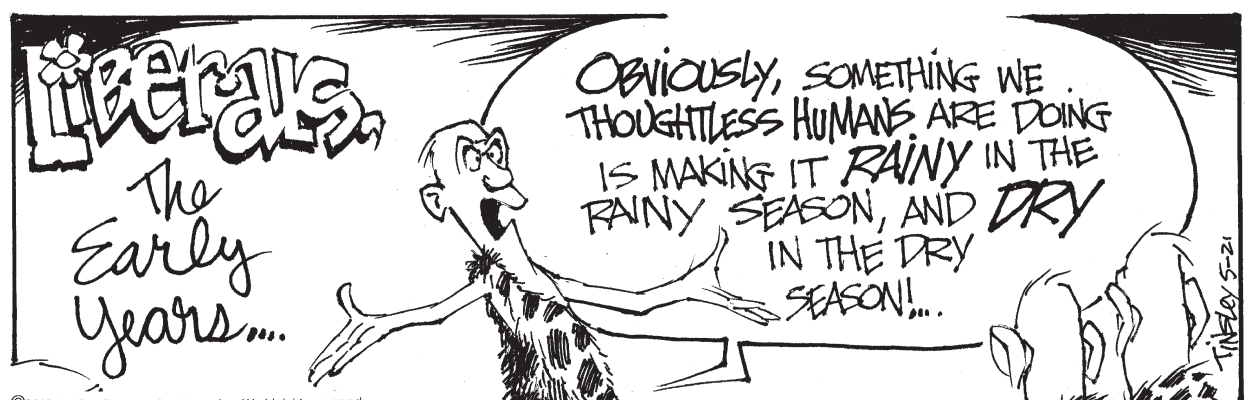
Put a new pump and motor on the end of the pipe (cha-ching!), lower 160 feet worth back into the well casing, wire it up, throw on the power, and, voila, finally we have water!

Hope the cows are happy. And I just can't wait to get the bill. Or – maybe I can....

Evan Barnum, who does technical support and troubleshooting for the Colby Free Press and all of Haynes Publishing, is expected to be the calm in a storm of crisis, though some disasters loom bigger than others.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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