



## Free Press Viewpoint

### Vote fraud issue just scare politics

It's disappointing to see Sen. Sam Brownback, the Republican candidate for governor, jump in and endorse calls for a "voter ID" law in Kansas.

The senator, in a press release Monday with the party's candidate for secretary of state, Kris Kobach, pledged they would work together to pass such a law.

And while this newspaper generally leans Republican, we see this as foolish. There is no evidence Kansas has a vote fraud problem. Under long-time Republican Secretary of State Ron Thornburg, Kansas has had clean elections for years. That has not changed.

Kobach, a law professor and anti-immigration activist, is way out in right field on this issue. He tries to scare voters with the specter of illegal immigrants somehow tainting Kansas elections.

But this is a solution looking for a problem. With no evidence of voter fraud or of illegals trying to vote, we think Kobach is just trying to scare us. That's wrong, and it's wrong for Sen. Brownback to get involved.

We know the senator, as leader of the Republican ticket and an apparent shoo-in candidate, needs to do what he can for the entire ticket. But Kobach is a one-issue candidate - illegal immigration - running for an office that has nothing to do with immigration.

Kansas has plenty of problems, starting with a budget that has ballooned under the influence of government "mandates" and pressure from schools and public employees. We can't pay for the demands of schools, prisons, roads and other programs. Taxes are high and rising; the property tax is out of control.

All these are things we will look to Gov. Brownback to find solutions for. The state needs leadership that will bring big government under control and provide a fertile climate for small business and job growth.

We need lower spending, a lid on taxes and leaders who will interpret the role of government as something less than all-encompassing. We have not had that for the last seven years.

Instead, we've seen the budget grow, taxes increased at the city, county, school district and state level. We've seen nothing to indicate that the governor's office even cared about those issues.

Here, however, we have two Republicans pushing a big-government bill to tighten the noose of security-apparatus control around all Kansans' necks. That's not something that those who love freedom should applaud.

It's not something Mr. Brownback should give credence to. And it's not something Kansas needs.

Give it a rest, gentlemen. - Steve Haynes

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Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

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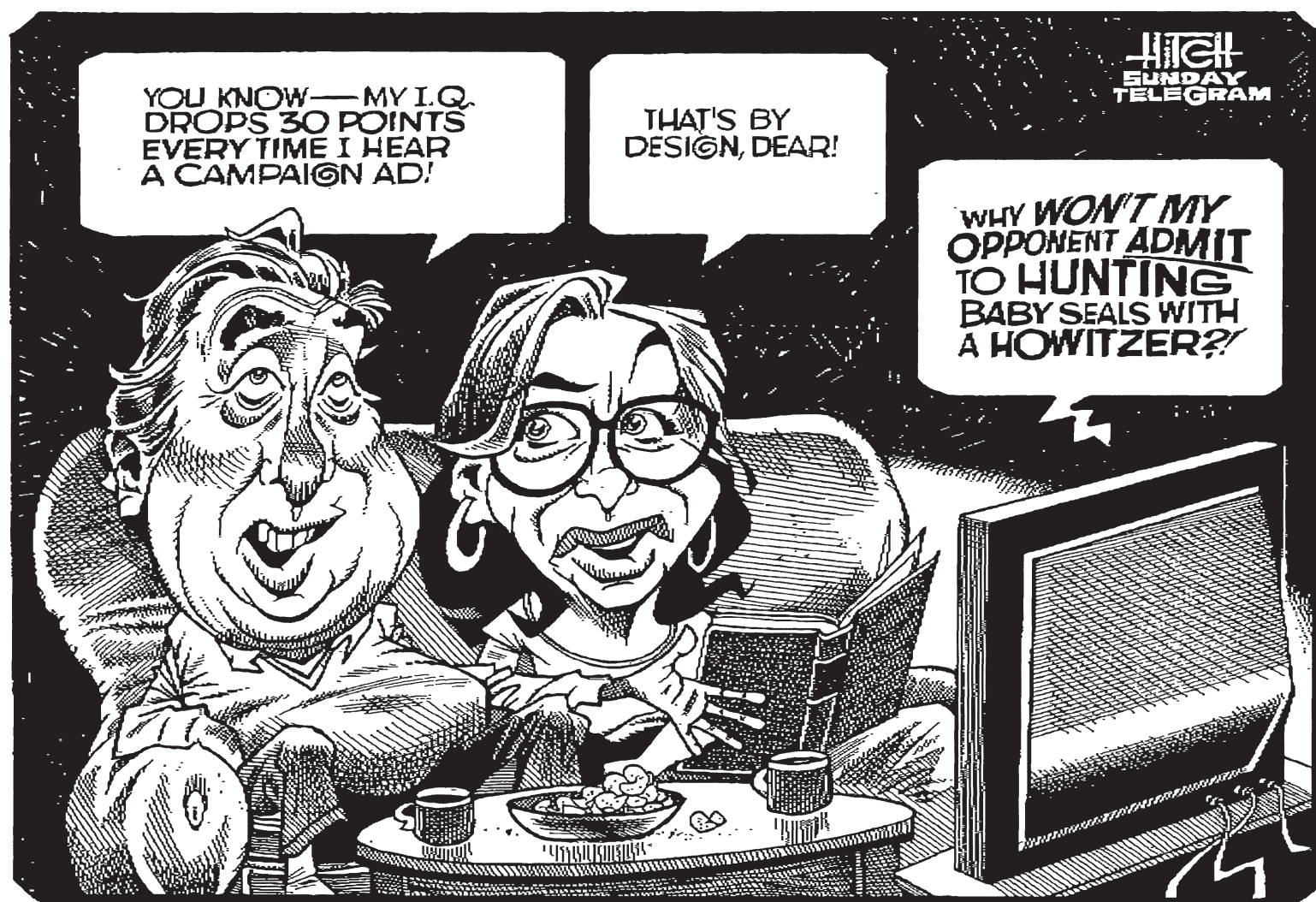
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



### 'Perfect mother' not her role model

June Cleaver died earlier this week at the age of 94.

To be more correct, Barbara Billingsley, the actress who played the perfect television mother on *Leave it to Beaver*, died following a long illness.

Which is sad, of course, but she made many women ill long ago.

She was so perfect. Her hair was always perfect. Her clothes were never torn, dirty or unironed. She always seemed to have a vacuum cleaner or dust rag close at hand. And, she always said and did the right thing.

What was not to hate when you're a working mother who's torn between house, husband, kids and work, and feeling like you're on the edge of failing at something almost all the time.

I remember as a child back in the late '50s and early '60s wondering why my mother didn't keep a perfect house, why we had to do all those chores and why Mom seemed so tired at night.



**Cynthia Haynes**

• Open Season

Well, of course, my mother was a teacher. She got up, fixed breakfast, got my sister, Dad and I off to school and work, then headed for a classroom that in those days could include eight grades and 30 or more students.

And I couldn't figure out why she seemed so tired every night when it was time to make supper, see that we did our homework and deal with grading papers.

Geez, June Cleaver never seemed so out of sorts.

My mother didn't do the vacuuming and dusting every day. On Saturdays, the whole family pitched in, some of us less willing than

others, and cleaned house.

Mother made breakfast and supper every day, but it was up to the kids to do the dishes. I thought we should get a dish washer like my cousins in Kansas City had. Dad said that he had a dishwasher. If fact, he and Mom had two of them, and we'd better get started 'cause we had homework to do, too.

And then I turned into a working mother trying to juggle work, house, husband and children, and I became my mother. The children did the dishes and laundry and we all pitched in, some of us less willing than others, to clean house on Saturdays.

So while I'm sorry that Ms. Billingsley is gone - I'm sure she was a lovely person - she sure was a tough act to follow.

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 @ nwkansan.com

### Top students make top teachers

In the United States, only 23 percent of new teachers are drawn from the top third of our college students. But in higher performing countries, the majority of secondary school teachers come from the top third of their college classes.

Achievement of students taught by such quality-selected teachers is extraordinary. In Finland, well over 90 percent of high school graduates attend and complete college - twice the U.S. completion rate.

"Closing the Talent Gap: Attracting and Retaining Top-Third Graduates to a Career in Teaching" by McKinsey and Co. was released in September. It examines the highly selective teacher preparation programs in Singapore, Finland and South Korea.

When you have more high-performing college students become public school teachers, a much higher percentage of their high school students successfully complete college. And top-notch high school science teachers increase the number of students pursuing science careers.

A teacher needs to be a solid model of academic rigor, honesty and work ethic. It is hard to convince a young student to complete schoolwork with quality effort if the teacher does not exhibit that ability.

High school teachers must have a passion for their field that makes it the most important subject for their students to learn, whether it is literature or math or art or biology.

University research professors continue this inspiration with graduate students working in smaller groups focused on creative learning experiences. The bottom line is that Kansas needs to place our students face-to-face with



**John Richard Schrock**

• Education Frontlines

the best minds that we can put into classrooms, from kindergarten to the university.

But current academic indicators, from the number of schools that did not make "adequate yearly progress" goals to university enrollment figures, reflect mere bean-counting. This is not only irrelevant to quality education, it is a major cause of the decline in American academics.

At the university, we keep an eye out for college freshman who are so excited about the biology they are learning that they cannot wait to get back to the dormitory to tell their roommate about it. I try to recruit these young scholars into secondary-school biology teaching. Instead of being limited to narrow science research, as a teacher they can share their excitement for all new biology developments with the next generations of students every day of their career.

But when these scholars switch to a science teaching program, they soon take methods courses that accurately lay out the teach-to-the-test programs that are distorting American education. These young scholars want to excite kids about science, not drill them for tests and push paperwork. Many switch back to other science professions.

Both the Bush and Obama administrations

seem clueless about this harmful aspect of No Child Left Behind: it has driven many of our best future teachers away from the teaching field.

Boards that govern our higher education institutions appear just as clueless. In releasing the enrollment numbers of Kansas regents institutions, absolutely no consideration was given to the growing preparation of teachers in bogus online programs. We would never consider training surgeons online. Yet there is far more long-term and interpersonal interaction involved in teaching than in surgery. It is a disgrace that online teacher training has any legitimacy when it is so obvious that communication skills, honesty, work ethic and all those other traits good teachers demonstrate for our students cannot be conveyed in electronic correspondence courses. Online, there is no "company to keep."

By focusing on test scores, we substitute examinations for an education. To continue down the current road of reducing school to test prep, the U.S. can settle for teachers mostly from the bottom of the college classes. Our dropout rate will continue to soar and our college completion continue to fall.

To reclaim the teacher professionalism that made American education great until recently, we will need far more teachers drawn from the top third of our college graduates - because we learn far more from the company we keep than from the tests we take.

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

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