

Other Viewpoints

Voter fraud issue needs investigation before legislation

Kris Kobach views his election on Nov. 2 as the new Kansas secretary of state as "a mandate" to take action on voter fraud.

Some would question that, but even if it is true, it seems that Kobach is planning to pursue solutions for voter fraud before determining exactly what the problem is.

Kobach said Thursday that he plans to have a bill drafted for state legislators by Jan. 1 that would require voters to show photo ID at the polls and require people registering to vote for the first time in a county to present proof of citizenship. Within a week of taking office on Jan. 10, he added, he will assign one or two members of his staff to investigate allegations of election fraud.

Kobach may be getting the cart before the horse. It would make far more sense to have his staff investigate reports of election fraud, ascertain the extent of the problem, then evaluate the best course of action to attack the specific problems that his staff uncovers.

It could be that requiring people to show identification at the polls would place a burden on voters without solving whatever problem the state might have with voter fraud or registration errors.

Every Kansas secretary of state has "a mandate" to take reasonable steps to ensure the security, accuracy and integrity of Kansas elections.

Requiring voters to show proof of citizenship when registering will be an inconvenience for voters and an added expense for county election officers, but if Kobach's office can demonstrate that proving citizenship and showing an ID at the polls are both necessary and effective steps to ensure the integrity of Kansas elections, most Kansas voters probably would go along.

— Lawrence Journal World, via the Associated Press

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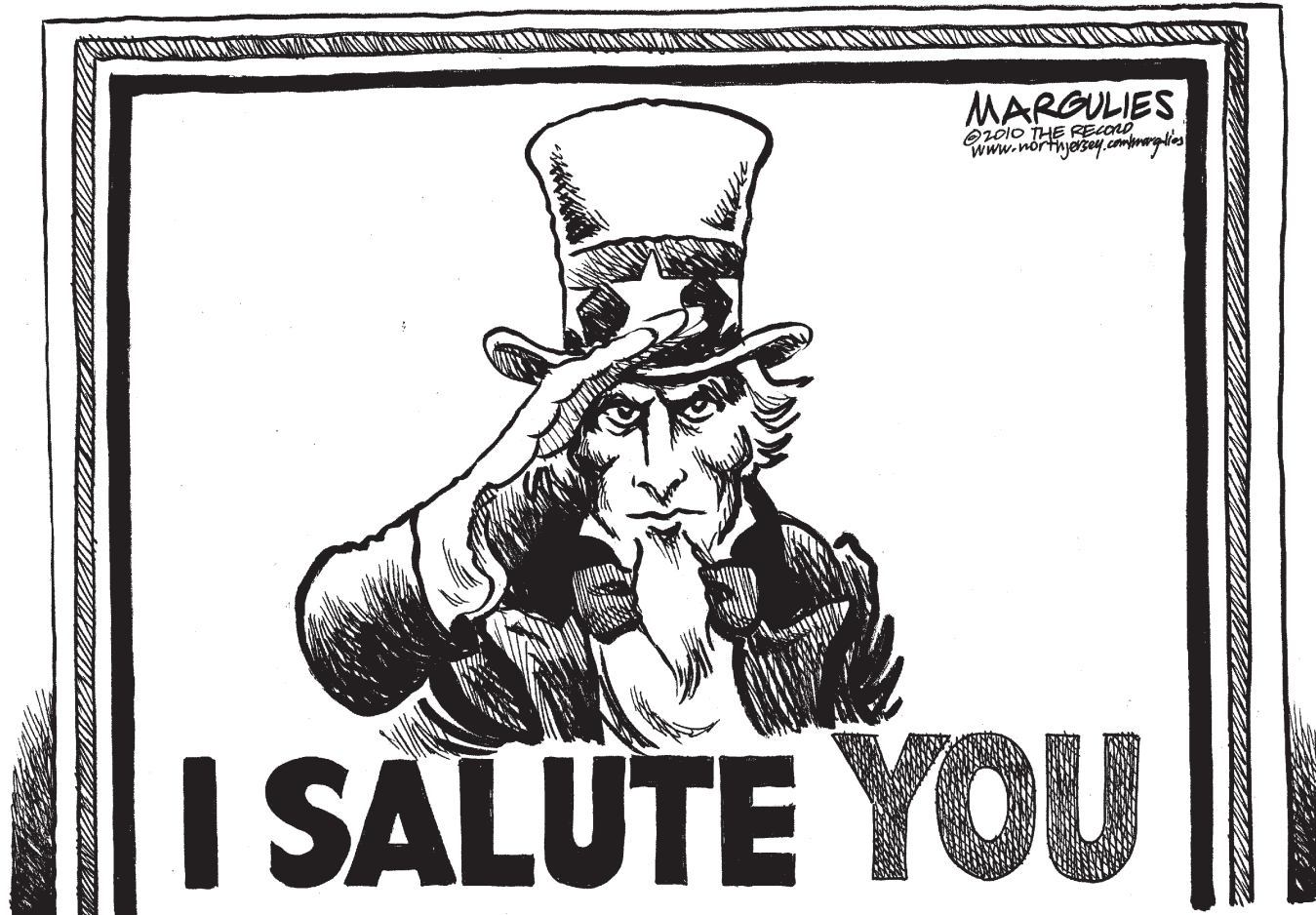
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Why don't we say what we mean?

We were visiting the granddaughter last week. Oh, and the daughters, too. They all live in Georgia.

I could write all day about how cute she is, but you'd be bored. Instead, random observations on the state of whatever.

• The language, this from a sticker on the front page of a newspaper: "Stop! October is Let's Talk Month! Parents take the time to talk to your children about sexuality topics."

Ugh. Why not just talk with them about sex, every parent's favorite?

Language isn't allowed to be simple anymore.

I remember the day when our eldest was about 8. We were headed home after a day's work when she piped up and asked, "Mom, what's sex?"

After her mother melted into a little puddle on the front seat, guess who had to answer that question? And all the rest, I might add.

Rule 1 for today's language seems to be, "never use a clear, strong, simple word when a



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

longer one will do."

• Language again: "This species is dependent on its habitat for"

Why would anyone write that way? Depend is still a verb, isn't it?

But it would be too clear, to simply say, "This species depends on ..." and it'd take half the space. When you're supposed to turn in 900 words, I guess, you need all the padding you can find.

Like unto that one is "mandated by the government." Twenty years ago, no one wrote "mandated" when they meant required. Maybe it's a government mandate, er, rule.

• That tagline on all those campaign ads: "I'm Joe Smith, and I approve this ad."

Ugh. Apparently, it's required by federal law, which may explain why it's so dorky.

It seems that back in the '90s, politicians were running attack ads and trying to avoid taking credit for the negatives. Now an ad paid for by a federal campaign has to have the "I approve" verbiage by law. So candidates have to take credit for the garbage they throw out.

Of course, no one wants to be thought of as negative, so candidates try to dodge that whenever they can. It's supposed to promote truth in political advertising.

As busy as most candidates are, you wonder if they look at all the ads before they go out. What the law might require is something like this: "I'm Congressman Joe Smith, and I have no idea what's in this ad."

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.

Veterans reflect nation's diversity

Today, our country will honor its veterans as it does every year, with parades, ceremonies, speeches and patriotic music.

Schools will welcome us into their classrooms and ask us to tell our stories, and everywhere we go young and old alike will clasp our hands and say, "Thank you for serving."

We are blessed to live in a grateful nation.

We also live in a diverse nation. Our veterans — 23 million and counting — reflect that. As Americans seek to recognize those who wore, they'll find women and minorities serve in greater numbers than ever before.

According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, about 2.6 million living U.S. veterans — 11 percent — are black. Another 8 percent are women. Smaller groups include Hispanics, 5.8 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders, 1.5 percent and American Indian/Alaska natives, 0.8 percent. These numbers together are about 29 percent of veterans.

We're no longer Sgt. Rock's army.

Addressing the American Legion's convention in Milwaukee, I expressed my desire to see more of this diversity in our own ranks —

Other Opinions

• Jimmie L. Foster American Legion

because from its inception, the Legion has always maintained that a veteran is a veteran.

From Frank Buckles, the last living World War I veteran, to Dawn Halfaker, who lost an arm in combat during Operation Iraqi Freedom and now serves on the Legion small business task force, we all share a common bond.

This is not a new development. Women were welcomed into the Legion before they had the right to vote in the U.S. One of our founders, Hamilton Fish, is probably best known as the commander of the first all-black U.S. combat unit shipped overseas in World War I — the Harlem Hellfighters, who in 191 days of duty at the front didn't have any men captured or

ground lost. Two of the country's most prominent civil-rights voices, Earl Dickerson and Corneal Davis, were among the first black veterans to join the newly formed American Legion and organize posts for black soldiers.

If you honorably served our country during wartime, you have a home in the Legion, period. We know, and cherish, a camaraderie rarely found elsewhere in society — color blind and gender blind. The oath we swore was the same, as were the commitment we made, the discipline we endured, the joy and pride we felt serving something greater than ourselves.

On this Veterans Day, let us thank God for the gift of freedom made possible by those who served our nation with honor, courage and commitment in our armed forces during all wars that enabled so many of them to earn that coveted title of an "American veteran."

Jimmie L. Foster of Anchorage, Alaska, is national commander of the 2.4-million member American Legion, the nation's largest veterans service organization. For information, go to www.legion.org.

Veterans Day reminds us of priorities

The past few months we saw the campaign season in full swing. If the yard signs and commercials were any indication, these campaigns were more intense than ever before.

While campaigns and elections are vital to democracy, I can't help but be concerned that amid the focus on endorsements and politics, we lose sight of what is truly important.

Perhaps it is fitting that Veterans Day is observed the week following the election to remind us where our priorities should be.

We dedicate this day to remembering and honoring our nation's veterans. Their service and the sacrifices of many before them have allowed us to live in the strongest, freest, greatest country in the world.

Our freedoms are so important men and women are willing to risk their lives to defend them. They do not sacrifice for Republicans or Democrats; they sacrifice for the good of our country to ensure liberty for their children.



U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran

• Capitol Notes

Two weeks ago, I witnessed this sacrifice firsthand. I had the sad honor of attending funeral services in Wichita for U.S. Army Specialist Tom Moffitt.

Specialist Moffitt grew up in Kansas and wanted to serve his country. He joined the Army and served in South Korea before beginning his tour in Afghanistan this summer. On Oct. 24, Specialist Moffitt's unit was attacked by insurgents and Tom gave his life in defense of our country.

At the memorial service in Wichita, hun-

dreds of friends and family members came to express their gratitude and sympathies to Tom's family. Outside, Patriot Guard members stood guard, holding American flags.

The death of this 21-year-old Kansan is a somber reminder of the cost of our freedom. As an elected official, it reminds me of my responsibility to act in a way that honors those who serve our nation. As citizens, it reminds us to live a life worthy of their sacrifice.

Now that votes have been cast and the election is over, let us focus on what is truly important. Love of country and a belief in a better life for our children and grandchildren matter more than partisan games.

If you know a veteran — whether it's your sister, dad, grandpa, neighbor, or teacher — make sure to reach out and thank them for their service and dedication to our country.

May God bless our servicemen and women, our veterans and the country they love.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

