



## Other Viewpoints

### Accusing courts is not responsible

It wasn't too surprising that some pro-life state lawmakers defended former Attorney General Phill Kline against ethics charges. But they should not make unsubstantiated, inflammatory claims about the Kansas judicial system.

The Kansas Board for Discipline of Attorneys completed eight days of testimony in March on allegations that Kline misled judges and mishandled evidence when he was investigating Kansas abortion clinics. The hearing is scheduled to resume in July.

About three dozen House and Senate Republicans recently gathered outside the House floor to denounce the investigation and to accuse the judiciary of bias and conspiracy.

"An unholy alliance existed in this state for eight years between former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' administration, the abortion industry and the courts," claimed Rep. Steve Brunk, R-Bel Aire.

Pro-life groups made similar claims. "It is a fact ... that the abortion industry, pro-abortion politicians and friends in the judiciary appointed by (former) Gov. Kathleen Sebelius are using mob-like tactics to try and take Phill Kline down," activist Jill Stanek said in a webcast before the ethics hearing began.

The groups also claimed that Sedgwick County courts and prosecutors were corrupt when grand jury and court cases against the late Wichita abortion doctor George Tiller didn't go their way.

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, recently claimed on the EWTN Catholic TV network that abortion-rights supporters "essentially control the courts" in Kansas.

Even though voters in Kansas and Johnson County overwhelmingly rejected Kline, and the ethics charges against him are serious, he remains a hero among some in the pro-life community. So it is understandable that they have come to his defense.

Perhaps there is a strategy in demeaning the courts. By portraying the ethics review as a "kangaroo court," as Stanek did, it sets up someone to blame if the board finds that Kline violated ethical rules and recommends discipline such as censure or disbarment.

It's one thing for activists and special-interest groups to recklessly accuse the courts of being corrupt. It's another thing for state officials to do so. They should be more responsible.

- The Wichita Eagle, via the Associated Press

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roberts.senate.gov/public/
- U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, Russell Senate Office Building, Courtyard 4, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-6521. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/
- U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us
- State Rep. Rick Billinger**, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7659 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov

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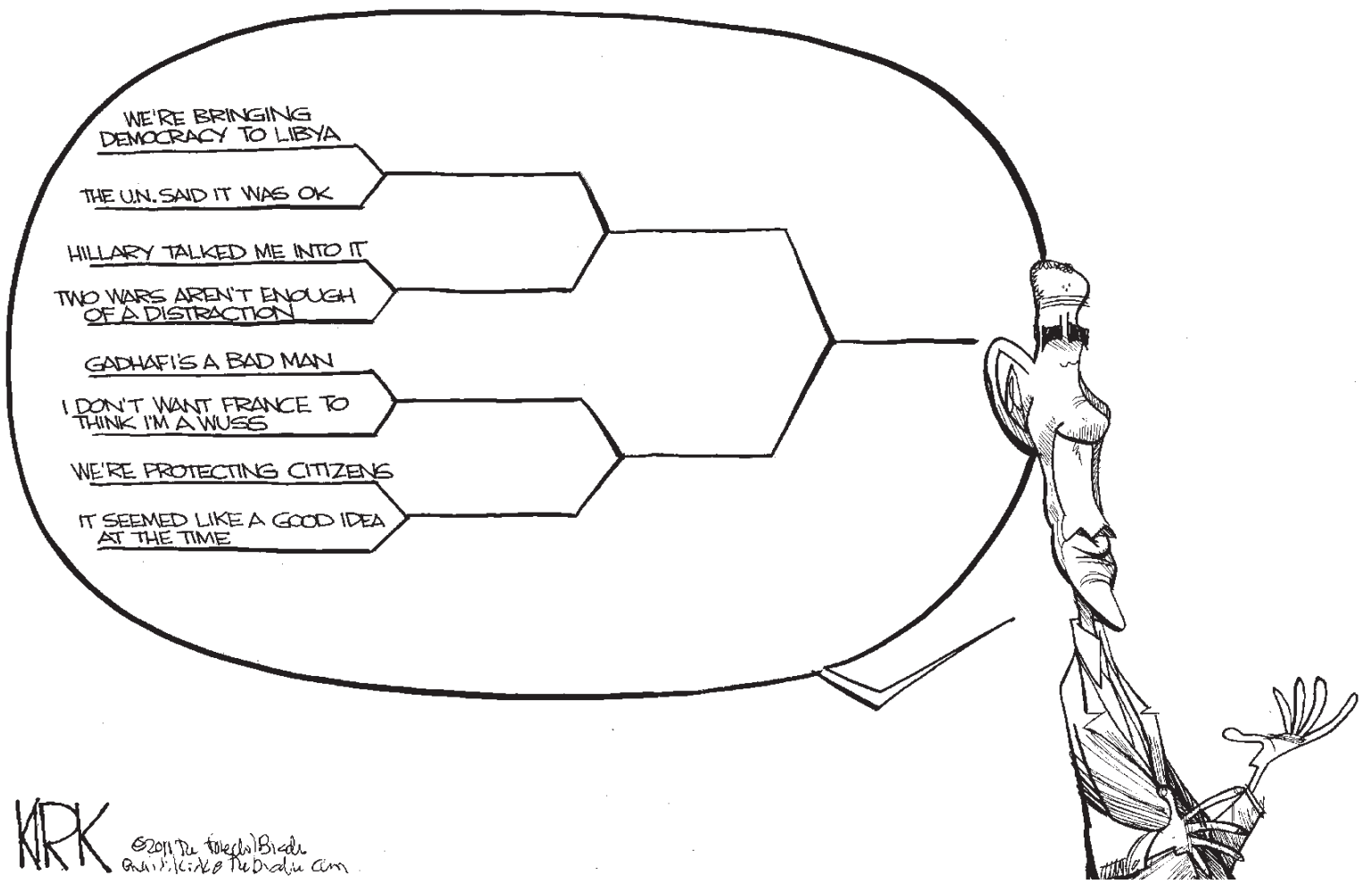
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### BRACKETOLOGY: JUSTIFICATION FOR WAR EDITION



### News channels not the full story

Today is the day I will make 535 new enemies.

Guaranteed! I spend a lot of time watching C-SPAN and C-SPAN 2. Right now it's all about cuts in spending. Cut! Cut! Cut! You can almost hear the pig squeal.

The debate can be entertaining and educational. Yes, sometimes fierce, as it should be. But it allows both sides opportunities to nitpick one another's approach to death.

While I might buy into what one side is saying, my mind might change when I hear the other side. If you want it straight from the horse's mouth, don't plan on your favorite cable news outlet to accurately provide that information. It just isn't going to happen.

What your cable channel does is give you what they want you to think took place. Do yourself a favor, see it on C-SPAN!

What is taking place in the House of Representatives currently is the new majority party's efforts to make good on campaign promises. And they (the Republican/Tea Party) are succeeding quite well. Of course, what the House passes isn't always a done deal; it still faces the Senate where, incidentally, the Democrats have control. And when some of those measures eventually end up on the president's desk, all he needs to do is pull out his pen and veto the bill(s) not to his liking. Then an override of the veto enters the picture. But no matter what happens, those new members of Congress can go home and tell their constituents they carried out their promises. And that's big!

As I look over the members of the House



**Tom Dreiling**

#### • A View From the West

(435) and the Senate (100), I often think we as their bosses ought to take an active role when it comes to their salary structure and the perks they enjoy, something not enjoyed by the vast majority of the American workforce.

Congress sets its own salary. Can you picture yourself walking into the office of your boss and telling him or her what your salary will be? And what perks you will toss in? Sure! Well, that's how Congress does it.

What kind of money do those elected people who work for us under their terms make? The rank and file House and Senate members are currently paid \$174,000 a year (thanks Google for the information). But there are exceptions. The Senate majority leader and the minority leader make \$193,400, ditto the House majority and minority leaders. The Smoker of the House - oops, I'm sorry, the Speaker of the House - pockets \$223,500.

It is interesting to note that 261 of the 535 members of the House and Senate are millionaires. Maybe that's why it's so difficult for Congress to understand the needs of the middle class and those who live in poverty.

Maybe what we need to do to bring them back down to earth is exercise our muscle and

move ourselves into a position where we, the people, determine what they get paid.

These elected representatives depart Washington on Friday and return on Monday, leaving only Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to do the people's business. What kind of schedule is that? It's one you and I tolerate because we don't have the guts to stand up and be counted. We can change that, you know.

Most hurry home on Friday so they can hold so-called "town hall meetings" over the full weekend. Don't let them pull the wool over your eyes. Those are than campaign stops.

Maybe the answer is to put Congress on an hourly basis and issue them time cards to punch in and out. Corny? Maybe, but that would offer some degree of accountability to the people who count most: us! Or how about simply cutting their pay (after all, they are talking about cutting) to \$100,000! That sounds like a reasonable salary to this man of the Plains who wouldn't know how to even write a check for that amount. Can't you just hear the squealing coming from Capitol Hill?

Or maybe, just maybe, it's time to consider term limits! I've been an advocate for that since the early 1980s. The time is ripe!

For those wondering what the president and vice-president are paid, jot down these figures: \$400,000 and \$230,700, respectively.

Tom Dreiling of Aurora, Colo., is a former publisher of the Colby Free Press and The Norton Telegram, and a former long-time editor of the old Goodland Daily News. He is a life-long Democrat, a curmudgeon come lately and a newly minted Coloradan.

### Time for checkup on health-care law

When Congress debated the health-care bill last year, then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi famously quipped, "We have to pass the bill, so you can find out what is in it." One year later, the negative impacts of this law are clear: health-care costs continue to rise and access to care has been jeopardized for thousands of Americans.

During the debate, supporters of this flawed law pledged to put an end to escalating health-care costs with the passage of the \$2.6 trillion law. However, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office now estimates the law, when fully implemented, will increase annual premiums for families by an average of \$2,100. Medicare's chief actuary estimates the law will increase health-care spending by \$311 billion over the next decade. And consumers will face a staggering increase of \$813 billion in taxes.

President Obama promised more Americans would have access to health care - but the new law jeopardizes access for thousands of Kansas seniors. Rather than strengthen the existing Medicare program, according to Medicare's actuary, the new law will cause more than one in 10 hospitals to face severe financial challenges within a decade, and one in four in the longer-term. This could have a devastating impact on rural communities in Kansas, where 75 percent of our hospitals are.

Despite the popular pledge that Americans could keep their current health coverage under the new law, the Obama administration now estimates 69 percent of businesses will be forced to give up their current insurance plans.

Clearly, the law fails to accomplish what was promised and makes many problems worse. It is no surprise that one year later, a majority of Americans still oppose this flawed plan. In-



**U.S. Senator Jerry Moran**

#### • Moran's Memo

stead of growing the government and forcing patients, providers and taxpayers to foot the bill, we must replace this law with commonsense reforms that increase competition and choice in our health-care system. The result would be what Kansas asked for in the first place: lower costs and greater access to care.

First, we must increase competition between insurance companies by allowing Americans to shop for coverage from coast to coast, regardless of their home state. Today, individuals can only purchase insurance from companies that offer policies within their state - reducing choices and increasing costs for millions of Americans. When Americans can shop across state lines, competition in the free market will help drive down costs, resulting in more choices.

Second, we must give states flexibility to address the health-care needs of their unique populations. Instead, the new law vastly expands Medicaid, which is already bankrupting state budgets. In Kansas this year, the state is set to spend around \$2.8 billion on Medicaid and will now be forced to spend an additional \$150 million over the next decade. Rather than burdening states with unfunded mandates, we should allow them to implement innovative ideas to care for low-income residents - such

as coupling insurance plans with cost-effective health savings accounts.

Third, we must reform our medical liability system and reduce frivolous lawsuits that drive up the cost of health care. Too often, patients receive unnecessary services because doctors fear being sued - defensive medicine. This inflates insurance premiums and costs patients \$70-124 billion per year - more than 10 percent of total health-care expenditures.

Last, we must support small businesses by enabling them to pool together when purchasing insurance plans for their employees. By coming together, companies will have access to more competitively priced insurance plans and can pass those savings along to their employees and their families.

These are just a few commonsense reforms that could improve our current health-care system, reduce costs and keep personal health-care decisions between patients and their doctors - where they belong.

One year after passage, the so-called health-care reform law is yet another example of Washington's "one-size-fits-all" approach - an approach that has failed many times before.

The simple truth is our health-care challenges can be addressed without sacrificing quality and access to care. In order to do so, we must replace this damaging new law with reforms proven to strengthen our health-care system.

Jerry Moran of Hays is the junior U.S. senator from Kansas. His committee appointments include Appropriations; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Veterans' Affairs; Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and the Special Committee on Aging.

### Mallard Fillmore

#### • Bruce Tinsley

