



## Other Viewpoints

### Rural perks good, with a few caveats

Just as people leave small towns for a variety of reasons, repopulating rural Kansas will take a variety of tools and creative ideas. Out-of-staters aren't going to jump at the chance to become rural Kansans solely on the basis of a state income-tax break. They are going to want quality jobs, good schools, affordable housing, accessible services, fun things to do – all the elements of a solid and promising future for themselves and their families.

Under Gov. Sam Brownback's new "rural opportunity zones" program, non-Kansans who move to one of 50 designated counties can be exempt from paying state income tax for up to five years (an average of about \$1,800 a year). In certain cases and counties, new rural residents also can qualify to have 20 percent of their student loans (up to \$3,000 a year for five years) paid by the county and state.

Those are nice perks for the people who find out about them and qualify – though it's too bad the income-tax exemption doesn't help somebody already in an urban Kansas county who'd like to try country living.

And some eligible counties have been hesitant to commit their own dollars to the student-loan payment program, in part because experience has taught them that the state doesn't always finish what it starts.

How rural counties fare going forward also will depend on how the Brownback administration deploys other economic development tools, such as the Commerce Department's new "deal-closer" fund. The administration's jobs-related coups so far directly benefit more urban areas, including Newton with the New Millennium Wind Energy facility.

The rural opportunity zones program also risks being undermined by other things the state is doing under Brownback's leadership, including cutting per-pupil K-12 funding, shuttering state agencies' regional offices, and axing state arts funding. A community with a school on the brink of closing doesn't exactly have the welcome mat out.

Plus, the fortunes of rural Kansas are riding on the results of Brownback's planned reforms of taxation and school finance. Suspensions are that the latter, for example, will tilt the funding formula in favor of rich districts such as those in Johnson County.

Then there is the challenge of the prolonged drought afflicting so much of western Kansas, which Brownback will focus on during a summit in Colby on the future of the Ogallala Aquifer.

Any new rural economy will need certain access to water. Of course, if any governor can do something about western Kansas' water supply, it may be Brownback, a former state agriculture secretary.

If Brownback wants to be viewed as a champion of rural counties, he also could better explain his voluntary wind-farm ban in the Flint Hills, which some farmers and ranchers around the state see as threatening rural economic development.

In short, Brownback's rural opportunity zones program can't hurt, but it isn't going to buck the state's alarming census trends all by itself.

– The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail colby.editor@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Free Press, its staff or the owners.

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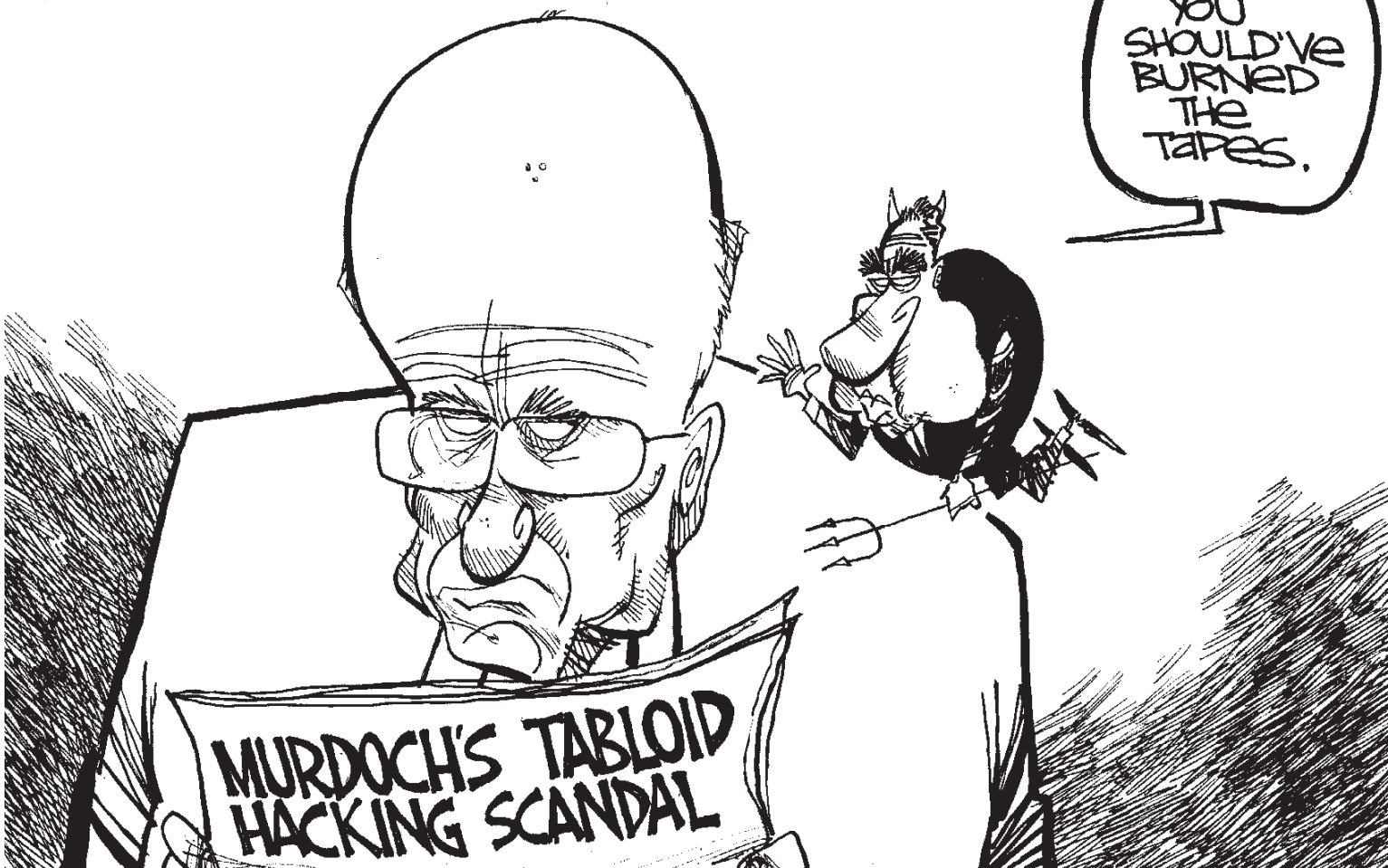
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### Cutting deficit means going without

Watching and listening the other day at Rep. Tim Huelskamp's "town hall" meeting in Oberlin, it occurred to me that a lot of us really don't "get it" when it comes to the financial crisis in Washington.

While the congressman was talking about voting against an increase in the federal debt limit to bring the White House to its senses on spending, people were still asking about federal grants.

We agree, Oberlin needs airport improvements promised by the government. Cities and school and counties need money for a lot of things. But like everyone else, we need to face reality: The government has promised to spend a lot of money it doesn't have.

We know the people who want to spend that money are going to complain like crazy if they don't get it.

And while we think Oberlin will get money to repair and relocate the main north-south runway at the airport, and maybe even to build a new 5,500-foot runway, it may take longer than expected as the government spreads out the spending.

The Federal Aviation Administration doesn't know how much it will have to spend this year. That will continue until the transportation budget is settled in Congress, and that could be a few months.



**Steve Haynes**

#### • Along the Sappa

We need to expect some delays, and maybe even welcome them. It means the government is finally waking up to the problem of every-increasing deficits and debt. The American people seem to agree that's the top priority.

At the same time, we all want "our" programs to continue without cuts. We want "our" grants and we want our money to spend from the government. That's only natural.

This time, however, the government may finally have hit the wall, as the bloc of "tea party" members elected to Congress last year pushes for an end to endless spending.

"The bottom line is this," Mr. Huelskamp said. "Washington can't do everything."

Amen to that.

Yet, important as curbing spending is, it's also vital to free up the economy to get people back to work.

"Forty-five million Americans are on Food

Stamps," he said. "Three years ago, it was only 27 million. And 13.9 million are out of work. That is unacceptable."

Dr. Jay Anderson asked what the administration's vision for the country is.

"To spend more money to grow the economy," the congressman replied. "To regulate more."

Someone asked if they wanted to ruin the country. He replied, "No."

"They just have a different vision than we do. One's going to work; one isn't."

"I'm not going to challenge people's motives. I'm going to challenge their policies."

Noting that changes to federal law after the mortgage crisis may make it nearly impossible to get a home loan, he said: "We're going to have a major credit crisis in rural America because of it. The result will be fewer community banks in rural America."

Someone asked what people could do.

"Pray for me," Mr. Huelskamp replied.

"Pray for all our leaders. We have some real issues to face, and we need some real wisdom to face them with."

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

### Life, health and unity are what we need

To the Editor:

A few comments on major political issues: **Abortion:** I am pro-life. I've been called heartless when it comes to legalizing abortion. I am pro-life for seven reasons. I had seven miscarriages before our children were born.

I know how devastating a miscarriage is and how it can psychologically affect a woman. How much worse is it when you have an abortion? Where would you be if your mother had aborted you? My husband says: Those who favor abortion have already been born.

**National health care/Obamacare:** Since when has the federal government ever mandated American citizens to buy anything from the government? Never. It's just one more way to get the American people to depend on government and they get to control your health and well-being.

In my opinion, they can take that "wonderful" health care and stuff it! The insurance you have to have on your car is mandated by the state and the insurance you have to have on your house is a protection for the lender.

**Division:** Do you remember how united America became after 9/11? We were a nation that reached out to each other; we were civil. We were united in our fears, hopes and dreams. It didn't matter our circumstances, we were one nation – America. Many, maybe most of us drew closer to God than we'd ever been before.

What happened to us, the United States of America? It's called "class warfare." Our "Feral" – once domesticated but now wild or untamed – government has happened. The far left has divided this country more in the last three to four years than ever before. Rich vs. poor, young vs. old, black vs. white, union vs. non-union, liberal vs. conservative, atheists vs. Christians and other faiths, highly educated vs. average or poorly educated, mob mentality and bullying vs. orderly discussions and debates.

Mob mentality exists in schools, workplaces



#### Free Press Letter Drop

#### • Our readers sound off

and everyday human life. In just a few short years we went from the United States of America to the Fractured States of America. We need to get back to that unity of 9/11, because we're under attack from within. Inside our "feral" government from the president, through the Congress and courts, down to state, county and local governments. Corruption exists and is alive and well.

**Taxes:** Did you know that in the mid to late 1860s the federal government tried to get a federal income tax amendment passed? It failed because the Constitution had to be amended. To become an amendment to the Constitution, it had to pass both Houses of Congress and the President, and be ratified by 3/4 of the existing states. The electorate voted a resounding "No!" to the income tax. The U.S. paid bills with import and export taxes on goods. Then in 1913, the government again tried to pass an income tax. It was signed into law by the president. Amendment 16 was added to the Constitution in 1913, during a holiday recess when most congressmen weren't even in Washington. Only a select group knew about it. It was never ratified by the states and the American people knew nothing about it, until it came time to pay taxes. It was an illegal amendment from start to finish.

It is in the congressional record/archives. Since its inception, the federal government has added 70,000 pages to that one sentence which reads: "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever

source derived, without apportionment among the several states, and without regard to any census or enumeration." Why 70,000 pages? What is wrong with a fair or flat tax of 15 percent divided among local, state and federal governments? 70,000 pages that even the most dedicated tax preparer or Internal Revenue Service agent could ever hope to know and keep track of.

We have to get back to the principles on which this country was founded. If we are not diligent, deliberate and careful, we will lose what freedoms we have left. We must remember "...that all men are created equal" and that "all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ... among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness..."

These rights are not granted by the government, but our Creator. America has to get back to our founding fathers' vision for America. It's not hard at all.

Believe that the government has a very small, limited place in your life – true liberty; Believe that your life has meaning – you were born for a specific purpose, at this time, this generation. Be as happy as you can be.

Treat everyone fairly and justly, be compassionate, in other words care what happens, don't just roll over and play 'possum' 'til the crisis passes. Maybe, just maybe this country can return to her former greatness. I believe this and I hope you do, too.

Jari Skiles Colby

Editor's note: According to the National Constitution Center, the 16th Amendment was ratified by the requisite 36 states on Feb. 3, 1913. Later votes bring the total number of ratifying states to 42 of the 48 existing at that time.



### Mallard Fillmore

#### • Bruce Tinsley

