

Other Viewpoints

No rush needed on voter ID law

If there was reason to believe that Kansas has a serious problem with noncitizens voting in its elections, it might make sense to rush into a voter registration system designed to stem such abuse.

However, because there is little evidence that such a problem exists, it only makes sense for the state to take a little time to implement the requirement that Kansas residents show proof of citizenship when they register to vote.

The county clerks who actually have to run the elections are saying they have enough changes to deal with in the coming year without adding the proof-of-citizenship requirement. Secretary of State Kris Kobach should respect their opinion.

Earlier this year, the Kansas Legislature approved two laws proposed by Kobach to increase election security in the state: a requirement that voters show proof of their U.S. citizenship when they register to vote and also show photo identification at the polls.

The voter ID law is scheduled to go into effect in January 2012, but lawmakers thought that was enough change for one year, so they pushed the implementation of the proof-of-citizenship requirement back to January 2013. Earlier, Kobach said he planned to urge the 2012 Legislature to move the citizenship requirement up to March 2012. His goal is to have both changes in place before the 2012 presidential election.

A statewide task force, which includes Douglas County Clerk Jamie Shew, is working on the details to implement both laws – and there are many details to consider. Because 2012 is a presidential election, it will attract many voters who may not have voted since the last presidential election. Some people may have moved during that time. Many voters will not be familiar with the voter ID requirement. Election workers will have to be trained on how to handle various situations, such as people presenting IDs with addresses that don't match election records or have photos that don't look a lot like the people presenting them.

During a high-volume presidential election, resolving all of these issues could cause significant delays at the polls. Trying to run a smooth, efficient election despite the new voter ID laws is enough to ask of county election officials. Trying to rush the implementation of the citizenship law would be an invitation to mistakes and frustration for both voters and election officials.

We know that Kobach wants to make Kansas elections the most secure in the nation, but the mistakes that might result from such rapid implementation of the citizenship/registration law pose a greater threat to the integrity of the 2012 elections than the handful of noncitizen voters who might evade current safeguards to cast illegal ballots.

– Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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COLBY FREE PRESS

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State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

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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.



Despite bumps, mom was a good driver

I can remember when it was rare to see a woman driving a car. Or smoking. Or smoking while driving. That just wasn't in the play-book.

My, how times have changed. Now it seems rare to see a man behind the wheel. And it's also getting rare to see either gender smoking, whether in or out of a vehicle. (applause)

I am leading up to the days when my mother was learning how to drive, thanks to her instructor, my father. Whew!

Dad most generally used a favorite country road leading to the farm of my aunt and uncle, Adelia and Ambrose Brungardt, for the test-drive. He would pull the car to the side of the road, turn off the engine and get out, motioning to Mom to move behind the steering wheel.

After he was settled in the passenger seat next to her, he would patiently tell her to turn the ignition on. She followed his instructions carefully.

Although the start-up sometimes was bumpy, it couldn't compare with what was yet to come. When Dad was satisfied with her starting the car, he would remind her what the two pedals on the floor were for. He simply called them the "stop" and the "go" pedals.

He would then tell her to slowly move the car from the side of the road onto the road. "Easy does it," he would say. Well, his definition of "easy does it" was no where near what the result was. My brother Jim and sister Mary, passengers with me in the back seat, knew the drill: we would hold onto one another, and



Tom Dreiling

• Man of the Plains

for good reason. Mom would tap on the "go" pedal and just as quick hit the "stop" pedal. We three kids usually ended up bumping our heads on the roof, the sides of the doors or on the floor. Ouch!

Dad would instruct Mom to try it again – and again – and again. All that time we back-seat passengers would hold onto one another knowing the end result. By the time we reached the farm, we were wore out, bumped and bruised, but more than glad to get out of the car.

I remember as though it was just yesterday, Mary asking Mom, "Why do you drive so bumpy? Daddy doesn't do that!"

The return trip from the farm back home was always under Dad's control. What a relief.

As I look back on those days, I am convinced the manufacturers of seat belts could not have devised anything that could have held us in place when Mom was at the wheel. But she turned out to be a pretty good driver, and not a smoker.

Political observation: Gov. Rick Perry, when he is using his hands and arms to help empha-

size a point, looks like he is rolling the dice.

Snippets: "Two Texans seeking the GOP presidential nomination? Neither stands a chance."

"... Mitt Romney will give President Obama one heck of a run in the general election next year. I can already see a Romney-Bachmann ticket."

"Your obesity column was right on target. I hope it was read by those who needed to get that message most. Well stated."

"I think the word 'obesity' is a bit strong. They are fat, plain and simple. And has it ever occurred to you that some of those people are fat for health reasons? Lay off the subject!"

"You were raised in a totally different atmosphere. You never had fast food joints, and what's more when you grew up most moms stayed at home, but today they are forced to work to keep the family going..."

"We went from AAA down to Double A+.

Heck, I'd settle for that grade in school!"

"Instead of raising hell, they raised the debt ceiling! What kind of stooges do we have back there in Washington! ..."

Your comments are appreciated. Please send to my e-mail below.

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.

Today's family farm defies old definition

It seems people outside agriculture routinely try to define the family farm. In our contemporary society this means people one or two generations removed from the land live in sprawling suburbia.

Today, men and women whose great grandfathers or grandfathers worked the fields with mules and horses, progressed to tractors and are now using GPS, sit behind desks and computers serving a public they rarely, or never, see or know.

The world as we knew it a few short years ago is different today. Computers, smart phones and our entire way of communication has changed the way we live and work. Social media has replaced traditional sources of learning and made our world smaller and in some ways more constrained.

Considering these factors and many more too numerous to mention, let's take a look at the family farm. Today's contemporary farm needs to be based on owner operation. This means the rights and responsibilities of ownership are vested in an entrepreneur who works the farm for a living.

The second key in defining the family farm system should include independence. Inde-



John Schlageck

• Insights
Kansas Farm Bureau

pendence is defined as financing from within its own resources using family labor, management and intellect to build equity and cash flow that will retire the mortgage, preferably in the lifetime of the owner.

Economic dispersion is the next important step in defining what a family farm should entail. Economic dispersion would include large numbers of efficient-sized farms operating with equal access to competitive markets worldwide.

No family farm would be complete without a family core. This family-centered operation must have a family that lives its life in harmony within the workplace. All family members share responsibilities and the children learn the vocation of their parents.

The ideal family farm would be commer-

cially diversified. Production of diversified commodities should help reduce price risks and maximize the use of farm resources to produce crops and livestock that would, in turn, provide greater self-sufficiency.

One final attribute necessary in defining today's family farm would be the acceptance and use of innovative technology. This should not only enhance farm labor but also help boost production.

Family farming carries with it a commitment to specific, independent values. These values become a part of the community and include conservation, frugality, responsibility, honesty, dignity in work, neighborliness, self-reliance and concern and care for future generations.

While it's rare indeed that one particular family farm may possess all of these attributes, together they have created a system of agriculture that has been a part of our rural culture since this nation's beginning.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

