



Other Viewpoints

Secretary of state not a part-time job

It has been noted before, but it is worth mentioning again: Kansas ought to have a law that prevents statewide elected officeholders from doing outside consulting work.

Secretary of State Kris Kobach remains one of the worst offenders when it comes to padding his bank account with consultant fees, in his case for anti-immigration work.

Kobach, unlike part-time state lawmakers who out of necessity hold other jobs or own businesses, was elected to a full-time position and is paid a generous annual salary of \$86,003. Yet he continues to devote time to his pet project – helping other states fashion anti-immigration legislation.

House Minority Leader Paul Davis, D-Lawrence, noted his concerns about Kobach as far back as January, shortly after the secretary of state was elected. At the time, Kobach promised to work at least 40 hours a week as secretary. That is an incredible statement by itself. Most people who reel in an \$86,000 plus salary expect to work more than the same 40 hours required of a worker making \$30,000 or \$40,000.

Davis recently renewed his call for Kobach to do the job for which he was elected instead of pursuing his “personal crusade” against illegal immigration.

Kobach’s response – that he does consulting work on his own time – doesn’t hold water. Kansas voters elected Kobach to represent their interests full-time in the Secretary of State Office, not the interests of other states wanting to climb on the anti-immigration bandwagon. Imagine Gov. Sam Brownback offering to write education reform laws for the state of Colorado in his spare time – and for a consultant’s fee. Taxpayers and voters immediately would question Brownback’s loyalties and why the state needs a full-time governor.

More to the point – and the reason Davis again called on Kobach to tend to matters at the Secretary of State Office – were recent fines levied against the Kobach campaign for financial contributions, suggesting the secretary has taken his eye off the ball. The maximum \$5,000 fine the campaign was assessed centered on failure to report \$80,000 in contributions and expenses for Kobach’s 2010 run for secretary of state. And the secretary has had his run-ins with federal election officials.

Yet Kobach is not going to give up his outside clients. And it is unlikely enough lawmakers would sign off on a law that prevents such consulting work. Voters’ only recourse would be to not re-elect Kobach, which would disencumber him from the burdensome duties of the Secretary of State Office that keep him from pursuing his real life’s work.

– *The Hutchinson News, via the Associated Press*

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Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter
colby.sports@nwkansas.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansas.com

Tom Miller, Christina Beringer - Society Reporters
colby.society@nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING
colby.ads@nwkansas.com

Kathryn Ballard

Advertising Representative
kballard@nwkansas.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Kylie Freeman - Office Manager
kfreeman@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

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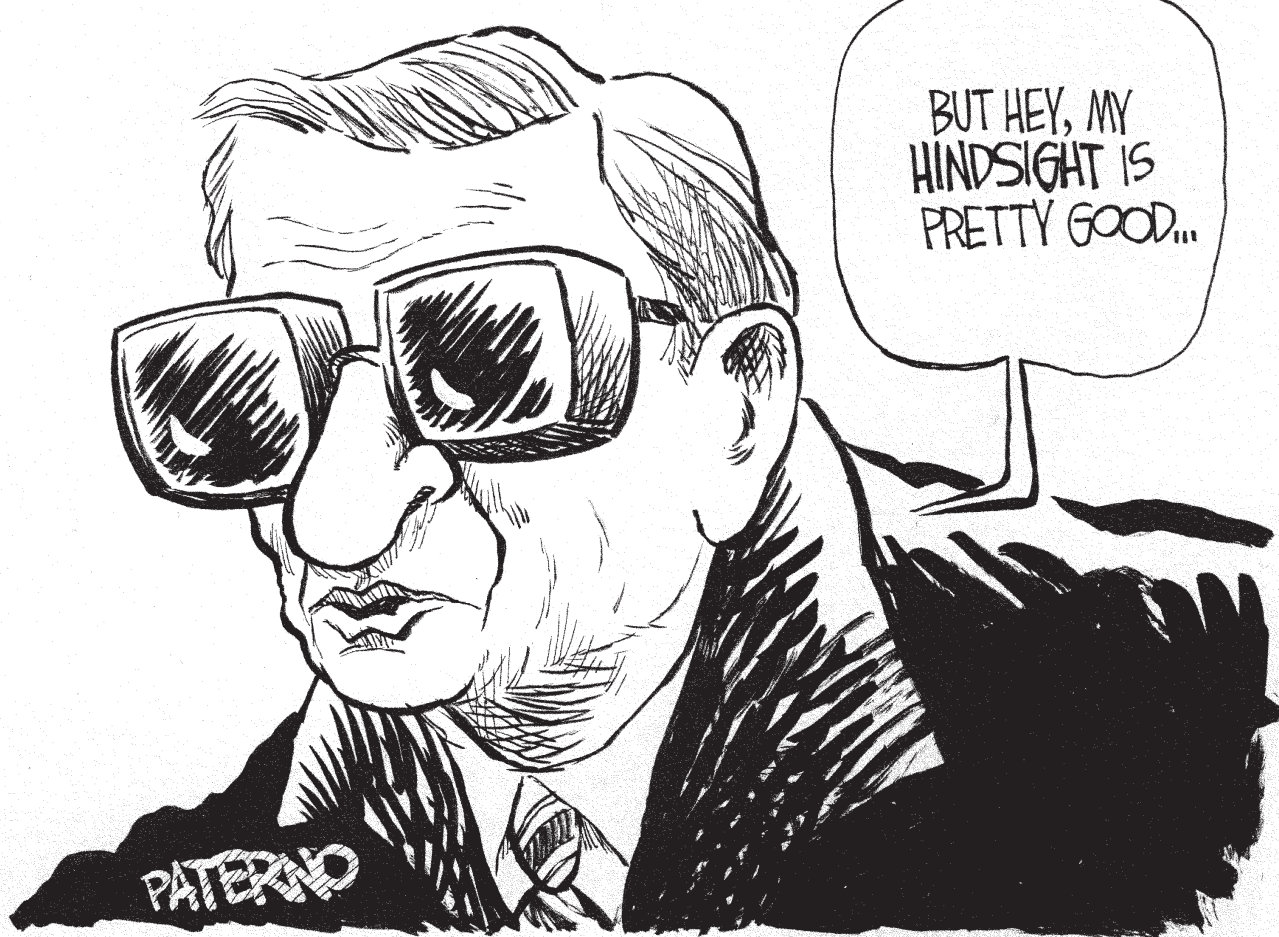
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ANNA WELLD HERRARD
KOTERBA



Veteran finds memories, history on ship

It seems the term “tall ship” must have come from John Masfield’s poem, “Sea Fever.” My sea-faring Dad quoted that poem to me a hundred times, but he never sailed in a tall ship. Still, as a seafarer, he too felt the romance that whistled with the wind in the rigging.

“I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky / And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by / ... And a grey mist on the sea’s face, and a grey dawn breaking.”

We crossed the bow of the U.S. Coast Guard Barque Eagle. She was tied up on the pier, in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor last month. My wife, a retired Navy captain, and her cousin, a nuclear submarine officer of 30 years, accompanied me as we toured this 1936 vessel. I was surprised to see a photo of a buoyant Harry Truman, his hat back on his head like a cowboy’s, as he manned the helm of this captured German sail-training ship in 1946.

He had the year before announced V-E Day in Europe, his own 61st birthday. For nautical FDR to be shown steering a sailing vessel would not have been a surprise. But for mule-driving Harry, the Missouri National Guard artillery captain of World War I, it was unexpected.

The last time I visited the Eagle, she was all torn apart in the Coast Guard Yard at Curtis Bay, Md. Several years ago, Capt. Phil Sullivan took me through the ship as she was undergoing a major overhaul. I saw the boilerplate in the engine room (yes, great sailing ships still have engines). It indicated the vessel was really a Wessel.

Her original name was Horst Wessel. That was the name of a Nazi thug and brawler who was killed in a street fight. The Nazi’s anthem was “The Horst Wessel Song” and if you’ve

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• **Robert Morrison**
Family Research Council

seen “Cabaret” or any one of hundreds of programs on the Hitler Channel, you’ve heard it.

A bad man. A bad beginning. The Eagle was originally built in the Blom and Voss Shipyard in Hamburg. Phil Sullivan told me she was built in just 100 days, by shipyard workers working triple shifts around the clock. That was 1936.

The Eagle was seized by the U.S. in 1946, as part of war reparations. Her sister ships were seized, too. The great tall ships of the world include Tovarisch (Russia) and Dar Pomorza (Poland). Both were also built by Blom and Voss.

On board, we were greeted by another surprise – not Coast Guard Academy cadets, but officer candidates from the Coast Guard’s officer candidate school program. When I went through officer candidate school, we never got to sail on the Eagle.

Our first guide met us on the forecandle. He was gunner’s mate, enlisted, before he went to officer candidate school. He talked about his wife and two children, with one on the way. How hard it was to say to his four-year old daughter that Daddy isn’t coming home tonight. His two-year-old son really cannot understand.

This class is slated to graduate Dec. 7, the 70th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, and our

young officer candidate was fully aware that it is “a date that will live in infamy.” He told us all about the devastating loss of the USCGC Cuyahoga in 1978. He knows the whole story. I knew people who were on that 1922 vessel when it was cut in half by an oil tanker in Chesapeake Bay. The Coast Guard lost 26 fine members that terrible night.

We moved aft. A pert young lady officer candidate took up the duty of telling us the story of the Eagle’s travels. She has never lived with her Marine husband, she said. She hopes to be stationed in San Diego, near Camp Pendleton.

Detailers are the ones responsible for assignments. They told this young woman that if she and her husband are stationed within two hundred miles of one another, they can count themselves lucky. Not surprisingly, she said, her Marine husband is planning to get out.

We ask so much of these young people. On this Veterans Day, we pay tribute to all those who served, not just those who make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. I cannot help but be thrilled by the pride, intelligence and devotion to duty these young people exhibit.

There was another unexpected meeting on the deck of the Eagle. I read previously unknown words from a great friend. He had saluted Eagle and all the tall ships in 1986: “These vessels embody our conception of liberty itself; to have no impediments, only open spaces to chart one’s own course, to take adventure as it comes, to be as free as the wind, as free as the tall ships themselves.”

Eloquent, grand and true. Those words by Ronald Reagan speak to my heart – and to the country we love this Veterans Day.

Robert Morrison, a Coast Guard veteran, is senior fellow at the Family Research Council.

Mandatory reporting clear in Kansas

The bruise on the girl’s arm suggested the imprint of a belt buckle. Class had not yet begun that morning. The student teacher gestured to her high school student to step inside the teacher’s office beside the classroom where she asked in private, “What is this?” The student hung her head and in tears said that it is where her dad beat her with a belt.

This student teacher whispered to her student: “You need to come with me.” On the way out of the classroom, she notified her supervising teacher to take over the class when the bell rang. This was a larger school with a policeman on duty, and Social and Rehabilitation Services was notified. They “took it from there” and she returned to her classroom.

In Kansas, designated professionals who regularly work with children under 18 are required to report suspected child abuse. The statute is K.S.A. 38–1522. Those who must report include not only teachers, but nurses, dentists, optometrists, psychologists, school administrators, therapists, child care workers, social workers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and law enforcement officers.

The report must be made directly to Social and Rehabilitation Services, or to Social and Rehabilitation Services via a law enforcement officer. A teacher would probably by courtesy also inform the principal; indeed local school policy may require it.

But the principal is not a substitute for informing Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). In Kansas, some time ago, a principal



John Richard Schrock

• **Education Frontlines**

was convicted of failing to report a suspected abuse case relayed by a teacher – he assumed he could “look into it” himself.

Only Social and Rehabilitation Services and police investigate. Investigation is not the responsibility of the teacher, principal or other professionals listed above.

The report can be made orally and a written report may be requested. However, the report is kept confidential, although the initiator of the report might come out in trial.

What constitutes “child abuse”? K.A.R. 38-1502(b) defines physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect as: “The infliction of physical, mental or emotional injury or causing of a deterioration of a child and may include, but shall not be limited to failing to maintain reasonable care and treatment, negligent treatment or maltreatment or exploiting a child....”

The trigger for reporting is “suspected” child abuse. In the actual case above, it was not necessary that the student teacher receive verbal affirmation from her student that she had been beat with a belt. Reasonable suspicion would have been sufficient. The law says that if you

suspect, you must report. The above case is rather blatant, but symptoms may be more subtle. Scrapes and bruises are a normal part of growing up. Emotional and sexual abuse may be far less evident. And a severe elbow scrape on a happy rodeo girl who just took first place at the county fair is not suspicious at all.

Our law to protect Kansas children must rely on the commonsense and keen perceptions of the professionals who work with our children. Since there are gray areas for suspecting the child. All of the professionals listed above, from school administrators to teachers to emergency medical technicians, who have chosen to enter these positions of responsibility are obligated to protect our children.

“Willful and knowing failure to make a report” as required by this statute is a class B misdemeanor.

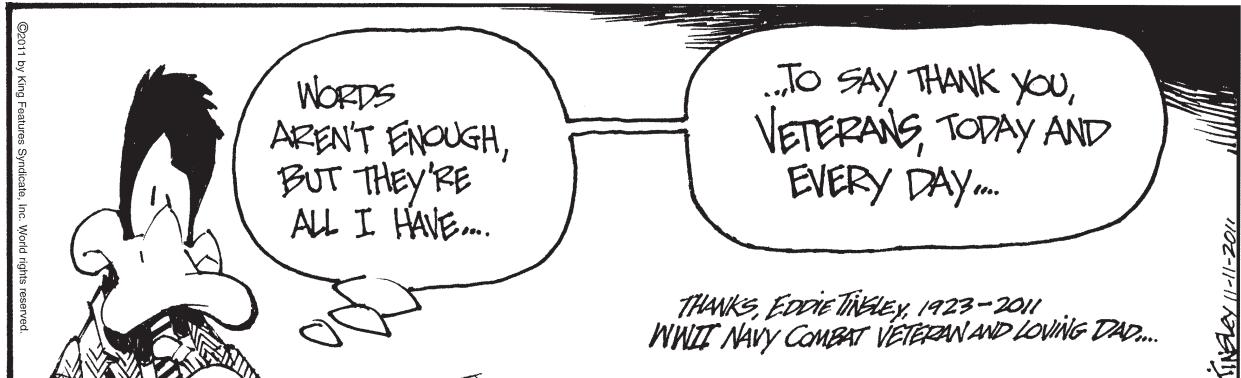
The tragic scenario unfolding in the Pennsylvania State child sex abuse scandal has caused many Kansans to ask who has responsibility for reporting child abuse.

This may be unclear in Pennsylvania. It is very clear in Kansas.

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.

Mallard Fillmore

• **Bruce Tinsley**



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WWII NAVY COMBAT VETERAN AND LOVING DAD...