



## Free Press Viewpoints

### Free or police state; decision is up to us

Here's what's wrong with tough, new immigration laws adopted in several states, and with a new Kansas law designed to stop "voter fraud" by forcing people to show a photo ID at the polls.

Both, by the way, are creations of our new secretary of state, Kris Kobach. He helped write both the pioneering Arizona immigration law and the Kansas voter ID law.

Mr. Kobach got elected on a platform of "stopping voter fraud," though neither he nor anyone else has been able to show the state ever had a problem. Many think it's Kobach who's the fraud.

The Arizona law directs police to determine if people they deal with are in the country illegally. That's tricky, at best, because American citizens are not required to carry identification, except for the law about having a driver's license on you when driving.

That means a police officer cannot legally ask to see your ID unless you are driving. It's simply not a requirement in this country, nor should it be in a free society, to carry "papers." That is what has separated us from many a dictatorship, even from many democracies.

So, when enforcing the anti-immigration law, how are police supposed to tell immigrants - who are required to carry documents - from the rest of us? By the color of their skin? It's touchy territory, with no simple answer to the question.

Why states should concern themselves with immigration is an open question. The federal government, which has the responsibility, has failed miserably. That is certain. But without federal backing, it's doubtful the states can do much better.

Meantime, we run the risk of slipping into a police-state mentality, driven by concerns for border security and keeping transportation safe from terrorists. Federal agents already skirt the law, intimidating people into showing ID when they could legally decline. The Border Patrol is active in searching buses, trains and planes within the U.S. and taking down people's names, which are then entered into a master federal database.

Most citizens do not know they can simply refuse these demands, and officers are good at making them feel they'll be in trouble if they don't. Many city and county law enforcement officers do the same thing when they want to search a car.

The question here is not whether we want to do something about illegal immigration. Everyone should agree that a functioning immigration system would be to our advantage.

The question is, rather, do we want to slip into a police state, where citizens have to account for their actions and movements at the demand of any officer? Or do we want to maintain the precious freedoms our ancestors - and lately, our friends and neighbors - fought so valiantly to win?

If American citizens and voters do not answer this question soon, it will be too late. The security apparatus wants ever to grow and increase its power at our expense.

What is your answer? - Steve Haynes

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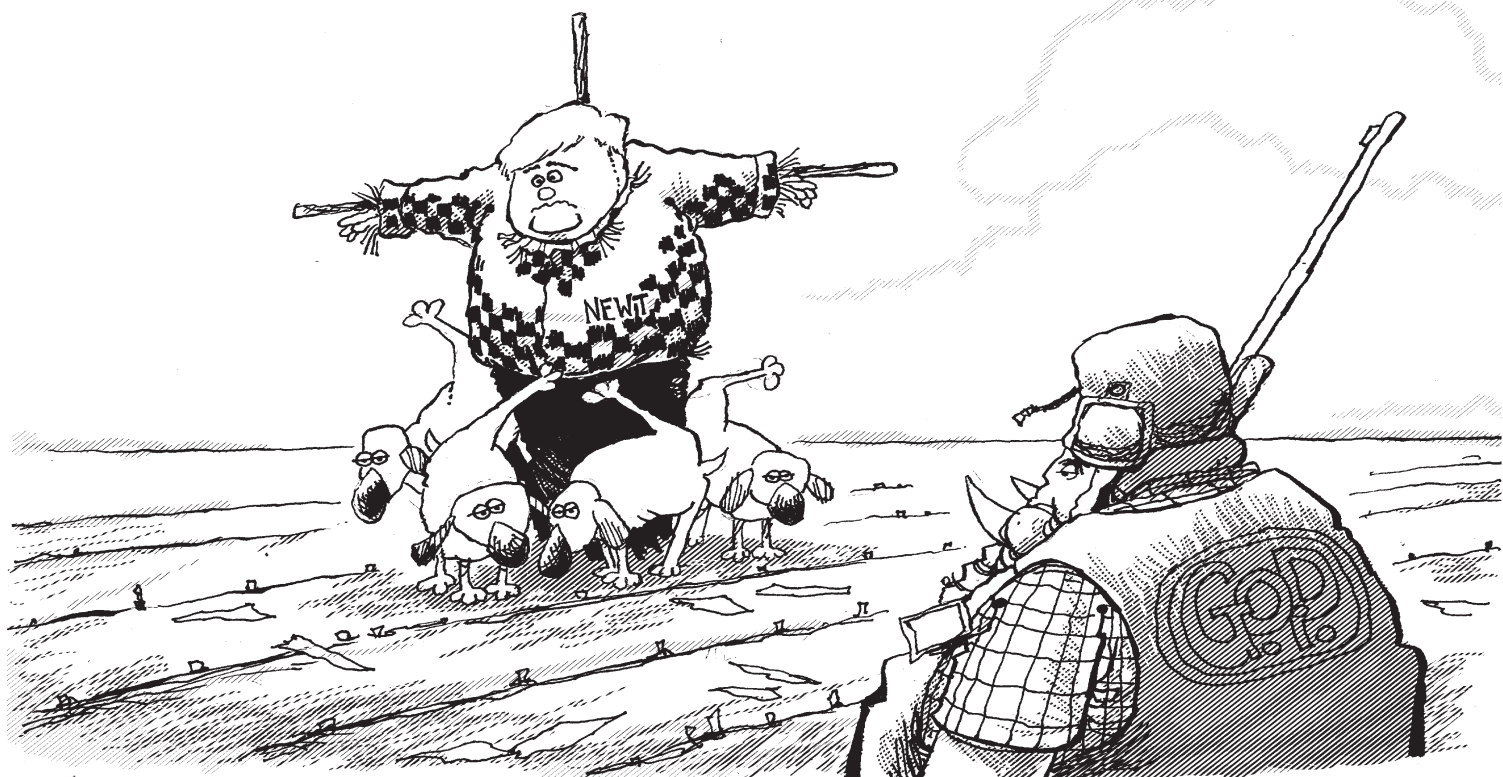
THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

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

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HUNTING FOR VOTERS IN THE FROZEN CORNFIELDS OF IOWA

### Kitchen remodel means lots of adjusting

It's my own fault, and I shouldn't complain, since I'm getting a lot of great exercise and I don't even have to go outside.

We're redoing our kitchen.

This has been a long-term project, starting with talking to the bank more than a year ago, then picking out everything from new cabinet materials to flooring to the tile for the backsplash.

The first big hurdle was getting the money. Steve and our banker navigated us through the process of refinancing the house. Now, with the money for the project in a special account, we're ready for new cabinets.

The cabinets were ordered the morning of the day the cabinetmaker had a fire. The fire didn't destroy the business, but it did set everything back pending cleanup and equipment repair.

By then, it was time to go see our daughters - and granddaughter - in Augusta, Ga. We were afraid that the cabinets would be ready while we were gone, so we cleaned everything out of the old ones and moved the telephone table and a desk that would no longer have a home in the kitchen to other rooms.

Before we left, we very carefully set up our microwave, toaster and coffee maker on a



**Cynthia Haynes**

#### • Open Season

desk in the little bedroom just off the kitchen. It would be a tight space, but useful during the transition. We could make coffee and toast each morning and heat up leftovers for lunch or supper.

The bedroom wasn't ideal, since it's carpeted and has way too much junk in it already, but it's close to the kitchen, where the stove, refrigerator and sink are.

Our timing was a little off, however. We returned home to find the old cabinets still up and everything needed for cooking stored in a small downstairs bedroom.

I soon moved the coffee maker back out to the kitchen, but cooking has been, shall we say, interesting.

I decided to make garlic toast one morning. This small chore required bread from the fridge, a pan from under the stove, butter from

the fridge - all easy so far, and in the kitchen. Now I needed garlic powder, which was in the basement; plates from the bedroom; and a butter knife, back to the bedroom.

You can imagine the steps required to actually cook a meal. Everything is somewhere, and I don't necessarily remember where that is. Every meal requires five to six trips to the basement and a dozen or so to the bedroom for something or other.

The old cabinets are in the garage now, and the new are being installed this week. Monday, they turned the water off in the kitchen, so we'll be eating out until at least Thursday. It's an interesting challenge.

Theoretically, by Christmas I will have new cabinets, a new microwave, new disposer and new sink. In the meantime, Santa has given me a great exercise program - stairs are supposed to be good for the legs - and something to look forward to.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com

### Postal Service cuts will cost companies

Our Postal Hearing has come and gone. I'm afraid the editor, columnist, or publisher of our local paper missed the most important comment and question asked at this meeting. I'm not sure the front page pictures were worth the space they took up. A little more detail of the dialogue might have been more informative than the picture of a bearded old man with folded arms. That picture didn't reveal anything about the gravity of the closing of our local distribution point and the delay of mail delivery.

One of the most compelling arguments, against the plan, was from the gentleman who pointed out the cost in real dollars to his company. Delaying the delivery of statements and the receipt of payments will cost his company real dollars. Interest charges on the delayed availability of funds to stop interest payments on millions of dollars of operating loans makes the Postal Service savings of a meager \$14,000 look rather insignificant. Especially when you consider the entire 677 area and the cost to business entities. What was the facilitator's response? You'll just have to learn to deal with it. In other words, take it or leave it. I wouldn't be surprised if the gentleman's company decides to leave it and find other ways of communicating and receiving payments. How many more 'leave its' will it take before the pony express rider can carry all the mail in his pouch?

Losing a local trucking firm might be acceptable if that loss resulted in better and more timely service. But when it cuts service and timely delivery, what is the benefit?

Loss of employment is a true loss to the terminated employees, but jobs are not the primary responsibility of the Postal Service. Loss of identity for a small community is hard, but again, survival of rural towns is not the purpose of the Postal Service. Mail delivery is their sole purpose. Profit is not, nor should it be, the end goal of the system. Breaking even,



**Ken Poland**

#### • Ken's World

whether that takes government subsidy or increased handling fees is, without question, a must for long term survival. Cutting service will not guarantee survival. In fact, at some point, it will guarantee failure. Making customers and local communities pay for the inept management and inefficiencies of the system will not guarantee long term survival.

When asked about the cost of the study, the answer was pretty sad. If the in house employee didn't cost them anything, then perhaps they should not have had that employee in the system. The failure to consider what direction most of the first class mail put into the custody of the system was headed or how inclement weather might delay delivery to the chosen accumulation and sorting site wasn't even considered in the study. What does that say about management and the expert value of the person conducting the study?

When the fella conducting the meeting was asked how long it would take him to get to Omaha, if he jumped on a mail truck, he shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Back in the days before we had networks of trucks and high tech sorting machines, I could mail a 1st class letter in my mail box, out north of Gem, and it would be delivered in Omaha the next day. Now you can't have a letter delivered across town in less than two days, and that is if Denver or Salina doesn't get overloaded and delay getting it back on the truck to come back home. Now that's efficiency and the CEO in charge of the system should get a double bonus of 1.6 million, instead of only .8 million

and the guy that did the study and helped design the changes probably ought to get at least a \$4 million bonus, don't you think?

Why can't we still get that overnight service to Omaha? Well, it just might be because the railroad cut service and became undependable. They lost business and took the Rocket off the line. Other factors, such as automobiles may have contributed to their loss of business, but the deciding factor was decreased service and dependability. Instead of trying to improve their service and dependability the railroad decreased service.

Is the Postal Service headed to extinction like passenger and mail service on the railroad? It would appear that way.

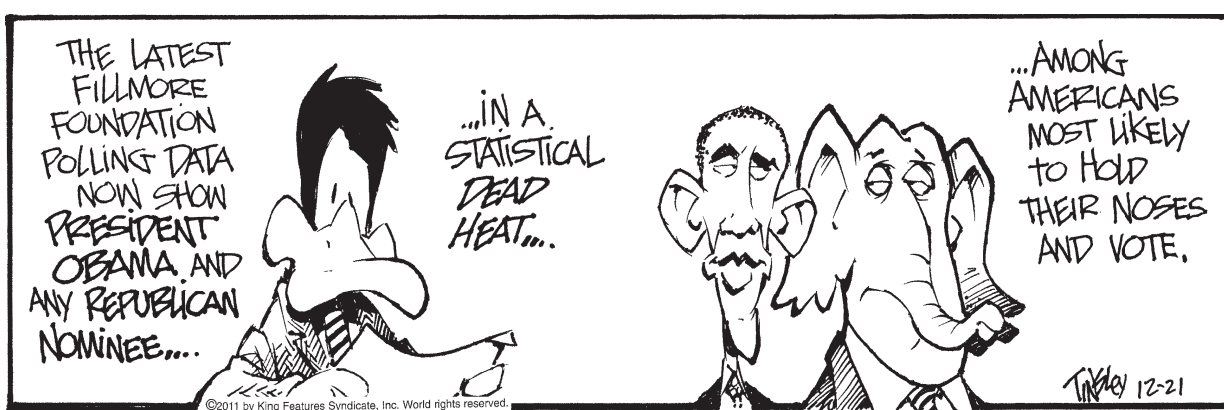
Sad to say, our Senator appears to think loss of local employees and the loss of identity of the small towns in rural America is the most critical problem with the management plan. What has he done to delay or prevent those losses? Nothing of any consequence. He doesn't seem too concerned about the inequity of the over funding of the retirement fund and whether the system can trust the government to protect that fund from disappearing like the Social Security Trust Fund. Deregulating businesses and professionals and lowering the tax bite on the top percent of the population seems to be more important.

What can you do? I'd suggest riding hard on your senators and representatives. Writing to the postal service management is wasted time. When they can get raises and big bonuses while the system is losing billions of dollars, they are not too concerned about you. They don't have to worry about re-election.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semi-retired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rcwinc@cheerful.com.

### Mallard Fillmore

#### • Bruce Tinsley



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