



Other Viewpoints

Waiver program a bad idea for labor

Kansas’ farmers, ranchers and dairy and feedlot operators say they are having a difficult time finding sufficient employees among the pool of U.S. citizens and legal immigrant workers.

Given the nature of those businesses and the population base in rural areas where many of them are located, we don’t doubt the need for labor. But creating a system through which illegal immigrants would be courted to fill the jobs isn’t the way to solve the problem.

Kansas Agriculture Secretary Dale Rodman has asked the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for a waiver to establish a pilot program through which undocumented immigrants with no criminal background could be recruited by sponsor companies to fill their job openings.

If a waiver is granted – which isn’t a sure thing – and the state establishes the employer-illegal immigrant network, the program would look for illegal immigrants who have been in Kansas a minimum of five years for the labor pool.

We support the state’s agricultural industry and all those who toil to make it work. We don’t endorse exempting it from the rules.

If nothing else, the system Rodman proposes documents this country’s convoluted positions on illegal immigrants.

To oversimplify, on one hand are those who support nothing but rounding up all illegal immigrants and sending them home, thinking that will solve a problem and free jobs for citizens and legal immigrants. On the other hand are those who realize illegal immigrants come to the United States in search of work and will continue to enter the country – and risk death doing so – as long as they think they can find work here.

That huge contradiction, however, is a federal issue and should be solved at that level, uniformly. Granting a waiver for a specific industry in one state only muddies the immigration waters and lets the federal government further ignore its responsibility to deal with the problem in one way or another.

The fact work is available is evidenced by the clamors from the agricultural industry and the fact Rodman and others think illegal immigrants who are experienced workers and have been in Kansas five years can be found in sufficient numbers to help.

We’re writing here about the agricultural industry and its labor problem, but in addition to the Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas Livestock Association, Kansas Chamber of Commerce and some local chamber affiliates, supporters of Rodman’s proposal also include building industry organizations.

And lest anyone forget, what Rodman, the organizations listed above and some legislators are supporting will be frowned upon by Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, who has invested a lot of his time in drafting laws for states where officials in the “round them up and send them home” camp are in the majority.

It wouldn’t be a stretch to suggest that Kobach’s beliefs and his current position play some role in the push to make some illegal immigrants not quite so illegal, and free to remain in the state and work openly.

Regardless, immigration is a federal issue to be handled at that level, not by a waiver or waivers to selected industries in selected states.

– The Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press

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Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

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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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THE LOST COMMANDMENT

How do candidates really tally support?

Mitt Romney says he’s not concerned about the poor. What has he ever done to make you think he was?

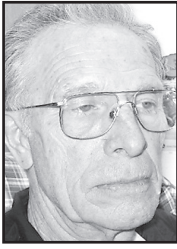
Neither is he worried about the wealthy. That’s not surprising, either. The modern Republican’s programs have always been more favorable to the perpetuation of wealth and its power. Just my opinion, maybe?

Both major political parties receive a major portion of their campaign finances from the wealthy. But statistics show the Democrats have a higher percentage of contributions from grassroots supporters. Both parties have some wealthy members. Both parties have some scoundrels and both parties have some very good leaders. Bottom line – vote for the individual. But if you’re not sure about individuals, my opinion is to take a chance on the Democrat. I’m a conservative liberal Democrat. You figure out what that means.

Corporations are people. Partnerships are not people; they are a business arrangement between people. But – corporations are people? Unions are monopolies with too much power and influence. It is OK for corporate heads and board members to contribute the minor stockholders’ money for political purposes. But it is not OK for union executives to contribute union members’ dues for political purposes.

Never mind that the minor stockholders may not agree with the chief executive or board members. No one ever considered that the corporation could distribute the profits to the stockholders and let them decide who to support. Never mind that chief executives and board members are hired or elected to make business decisions, not political choices, for the other stockholders.

Minor stockholders are never asked if they want a portion of the corporation’s profits to go to political action committees. Never mind that the minor stockholder has little or no choice in hiring or firing of chief executive officers or the election of board members. Ev-



Ken Poland

• Ken’s World

ery stockholder does not have equal say; the voting power of major corporations is usually held by a minority of individuals who own the majority of shares.

Unions are open to every member’s input and all members have equal power, when it comes to voting for their leaders. Members are welcome to open meetings when it comes election time for the executives who handle the everyday business of the union. They have equal voting power, regardless of their wealth or lack thereof. Unions are truly “one man, one vote.” Corporations are not; they count votes by shares, not individuals.

If Romney isn’t concerned about the poor, then he must not be concerned about unemployment. The highest percentage of the unemployed are poor. And certainly his wealthy peers are not dependent upon employment for their livelihood.

He says he’s been unemployed for years, and that doesn’t bother him. Job creation isn’t nearly as important as management’s compensation and distributable company profits for the stockholders, especially the major stockholders. Profit trumps all moral or ethical concerns. The corporate structure relieves all stockholders of individual responsibility and accountability, both major and minor holders. It is nearly impossible to convict chief executives or board members, as individuals, for wrongs done by the corporation.

Should the lower middle class and poor people only be concerned about Romney and his political views and stances? Or, should we

be concerned about the Republican Party machine and their desire to find the most fundamental and conservative candidate, who will have the campaign finances to wage the most destructive vendetta against President Obama? Should we be worried about character assassination? Should we be worried about a return to the policies and leadership that led to the mess we were in when President Obama took the oath of office? (Both parties must share the blame.) Should we be concerned about true religious freedom and equal opportunity for everyone?

Should we be concerned about the “religious right moral majority” that claims God is on their side and “appointed” G.W. Bush, therefore God approved all of Bush’s administrative decisions? Their interpretation of scripture that says God appoints rulers seems to fall apart, for them when the likes of Clinton or Obama get elected.

Their pious interpretation and enforcement of Old Testament laws seems to be subject to their whims, when it comes time for political power to enforce those laws. Should we be concerned about what will happen when the religious right begins to have internal disagreements on what God decrees? Could we find our nation in the dilemma that the Middle East Muslim-controlled countries are now in? Could we find ourselves in religious political wars that make our differences of today pale in comparison?

You, rich or poor, have a responsibility. Don’t let political or religious ideology or rhetoric interfere with sound reason and judgment.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired 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.

He’s owned it: the Obama economy

Three years ago, Congressional Democrats and President Obama signed a \$787 billion “stimulus” package into law.

The American people were told this massive spending would result in significant job creation and economic turnaround. Chief among the promises was a commitment that unemployment would never go above 8 percent.

Not only has unemployment remained above 8 percent every single month since the stimulus became law 36 months ago, but the outlook for this year and next is no better. The Congressional Budget Office issued its 2012 economic forecast, and the nation’s unemployment rate is expected to remain above 8 percent this year and to exceed 9 percent again next year.

On top of this, the number of long-term unemployed (people without a job for 26 weeks or more) has more than doubled in the past three years, and all but seven states have high unemployment rates.

This past week, I had the opportunity to question the director of the office when he came before the Budget Committee. I asked him about the impact of the stimulus on the economy, and he said that while there may have been some short-term benefits, “Unless there are offsetting changes made that pay off the extra debt that was incurred, the economy will be worse off as a result.”



U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp

• Capitol Notes

So, not only was there a lack of long-term or meaningful job growth, but America’s debt load increased because of it.

Three years ago, President Obama said he should be held accountable for the state of the economy, stating that if the job is not done, “there’s going to be a one-term proposition.” He probably hoped that he would be able to take credit for a recovered economy rather than the failed one he wound up with, but nonetheless, he set the standard. Certainly President Obama cannot be blamed for the condition of the economy in January 2009, but he should be for the condition in January 2012.

On top of the lackluster employment numbers is the poor state of America’s fiscal health. Since the day President Obama took office, federal debt has increased by 43 percent, from \$10.6 trillion to \$15.2 trillion. The country has run a trillion-dollar deficit every single year of his presidency. And, federal spending will ac-

count for 23.2 percent of gross domestic product, compared to a 21.0 percent average over the past 40 years. All of these factors have a destructive impact on our economy.

Another experiment with massive government spending did not stimulate the economy and job creation three years ago. Years of massive government spending and overregulation are the reason that our economy cannot recover today. The burden of \$15.2 trillion in debt (and another \$1.2 trillion this year), along with annual trillion-dollar deficits, depresses our economy, discourages our small businesses and distresses our taxpayers.

America’s economic conditions and Washington’s fiscal state certainly influence one another. If the president is truly concerned with getting America’s economy rolling again and getting the more than 21 million unemployed people back to work, then he should be concerned with the arena in which he can exercise the most influence: government spending.

When the president submits his budget next week, it should be one geared toward reducing spending, not repeating a failed government boondoggle.

Congressman Tim Huelskamp of Fowler represents the First District of Kansas. He serves on the Veterans’ Affairs, Budget, and Agriculture Committees.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



From: Unemployed Americans, to President Obama: From us folks all over the Nation...

Who are on an unwanted vacation... How long can you blame... "change" that stays the same... on the "Previous Administration"?

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