

### Other **Viewpoints**

# Hikes in tuition cast long shadows

The Kansas Board of Regents needs to exercise caution this week as it again raises tuition and fees at the state universities – and to recognize that this annual ritual results in higher student debt loads and probably puts college out of reach for some Kansas families.

At their meeting Wednesday and Thursday in Topeka, the regents are considering proposed hikes across the six state universities, including 5.5 percent at Kansas State University, 5.1 percent at the University of Kansas and 4 percent at Wichita State University.

As university officials made their pitches to the regents last month, several argued the increases were needed for faculty and staff raises, and especially to help the institutions reward and retain high-performing professors. Higher costs of benefits and utilities are driving the hikes, too, which traditionally are accompanied by more efforts to help low-income students af-

And since 2008, KU chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little recently told *The Eagle* editorial board, KU has seen a roughly 20 percent decrease in state funding. The percentage of universities' budgets that came from the state was as much as 49 percent in 1985; it's now about 22 to 24 percent.

As the state pays less, universities turn to students to pay more – even as institutions work harder to raise private dollars, as KU is doing with its \$1.2 billion capital campaign.

Kansas is not alone in squeezing public universities and their students harder every year. Last year 40 percent of states reduced spending on higher education, exacerbating the tuition hikes. And according to the College Board, between 2001-02 and 2011-12, in-state tuition and fees at public, four-year colleges increased an average of 5.6 percent each year, compared with 3.2 percent annually during the 1990s and 4.5 percent annually during the 1980s.

Unfortunately, it follows that the nation's total student debt now exceeds its credit-card debt.

It's a further worry that Republicans and Democrats in Congress have yet to agree on how to cover the \$5.9 billion cost of keeping interest rates at a low 3.4 percent on new federal student loans. A July 1 deadline looms, with the rate set to double if Congress doesn't act.

As they prepare to raise tuition and fees again, Kansas' regents and university administrators can take some comfort in the enrollment numbers; last fall Wichita State surpassed 15,000 students for the first time in a decade, while Kansas State hit a record 23,863.

But the state can't routinely ask students to pay more and more without consequences. As the state's Council of Faculty Senate Presidents told the regents last month in reluctantly acknowledging the need for higher tuition: "Continued tuition increases to compensate for insufficient legislative support are unsustainable, inconsistent with the public good, and erode access to higher education."

As they tax families' ability to pay for college, tuition hikes also are slowly eroding the state's ability to say it considers the higher education of Kansans to be among the state's highest priorities.

- The Wichita Eagle, via the Associated Press

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# Chance acquaintances speak of Vietnam

Riding home from Chicago the other night. we enjoyed dinner in the diner as we rolled along through the corn fields of Illinois and

One of the quaint customs of dining on the train is that unless you have a party of four, they seat you with others to fill up the car. We wound up across from a couple from California, both born in Vietnam.

Across the aisle were four friends, all chattering away in Vietnamese. Turns out, they were all members of the Class of 1978 at Da Nang High School, together on a cross-country reunion. They'd flown east and been to New York and Washington; now they were taking the train across the country, soaking up the sights of the Heartland.

At their high school, they said, each grade had about 800 students and classes averaged 40 students. They were expected to have a major which they would pursue in college.

Three of them had left Vietnam at various times; three of them stayed and had flown over for this trip. And they were having quite a time. Over dinner, I asked An how long she'd

been in this country. She said she'd come over in 1986 and had gone to college here in electrical engineering. Now she and her husband are software engineers for Cisco Systems.

How did she get here?

"You've heard of boat people?" she asked. "That's me.'

She said she'd been lucky. Some boat people a little house, only five or six people together. reading a good book or casting a fly.

Steve Haynes Along the

didn't make it. Some disappeared at sea. Some spent weeks on overcrowded boats and were

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lucky to be fished out in time. She and her older sister left Vietnam with the boat's owner, who took only his family, plus her and her older sister.

"Sixteen people, that's all we had," she recalled. "Three days later we were in Thailand. We went to a refugee camp. I was very

The camp was on the beach, she said, and that was nice, but the beds were right up against each other. Some of the others had been there for months; some told terrible stories of their escapes.

Officials told her that, since she did not know anyone in the U.S. to sponsor her, it could be years before she'd be allowed to immigrate. They told her she would need to go to a new camp in the Philippines, learn English and American culture and make herself ready.

"I had to sign a paper," she said. "I signed." The new camp was much nicer, she said,

Then, after a few weeks, the news spread that President Carter had relaxed the quota restrictions on Vietnamese immigrants. They'd be able to go to the U.S.

Opinion

"The whole camp stayed up late that night," She and her sister located a distant aunt in

Tulsa who would sponsor them. They flew to Oklahoma. In the summer when they arrived, it was hot, but in the winter, the cold was too much. A friend told them about California, and a few weeks later, they were on a Greyhound bus bound for the Golden State.

There they went to a community college, then the University of California at Davis. She met her husband and got into computers. She still thinks she has been lucky, even if Vietnam has changed some.

We talked a little about what we'd seen in our one trip to Vietnam and the differences we saw even today between north and south. And the stories our southern friends had told of how their families had been persecuted after the war.

"You heard true stories," she said. "You

Today, she and her sisters, all except the

heard true stories."

youngest, live in the U.S. Their parents and the younger girl stayed in Vietnam.

No one said anything about going back.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newseven if it wasn't on the beach. Each family had papers. When he has the time, he'd rather be

## Election-year amnesty: politics over law

Last Friday morning, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano announced that the Obama administration would grant election-year amnesty to certain illegal aliens

It would apply to those who came here before the age of 16, have not been convicted of any major crimes, are in or have completed school or military service and can somehow prove they have never returned to their own country since coming here. In addition to freedom from criminal prosecution for immigration law violations, the Obama administration will allow these illegal aliens permission to work in the United States.

When the 1986 Immigration and Reform Control Act gave amnesty to roughly 3 million illegal aliens, it also gave the attorney general the authority to change the terms of work authorization as he or she sees fit. Since then, the Department of Homeland Security secretary has assumed that authority.

I support the HALT Act (HR 2497), which would reserve that authority to the elected Congress, not a political appointee or the president.

IN OTHER

NEWS, THE NEW



Tim Huelskamp Capitol

Notes

With this election-year amnesty, once again the Obama administration has put politics ahead of the U.S. Constitution and the executive branch's obligation to enforce the law evenly and across the board.

And, with this ruling, the Obama administration has created an enforcement nightmare by design. How and to what extent can agents determine the actual fulfillment of the eligibility criteria?

The terms of this arrangement say that an eligible person cannot have committed a crime. However, entering the country through nonlegal means, overstaying a visa or using fraudulent documents like fake Social Security cards or birth certificates are all crimes. Yet, many people eligible for this amnesty will not have a

My Mission is to be

DISTINCTIVELY

charge or conviction for any of these crimes.

Our nation is a nation of laws, yet Secretary Napolitano said immigration laws are not supposed to be "blindly enforced." Ironically, America is an attractive place to live, work and raise a family because the rule of law protects the freedoms to do all of that. Yet, undermining the rule of law is exactly what the Obama administration does with this new order.

We already have millions of people who are out of work, and now President Obama wants to make more people legally eligible to work? One out of two recent college graduates are unemployed or underemployed and more than 70 percent of teenagers are without summer jobs. Certainly America is about opportunity. but not when the law has been broken and exploited by those illegally in this country.

President Obama's announcement shows only crass election-year politics, not any concern for the responsibilities and duties - as well as limitations - of his office.

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

"WHILE AVOIDING

ALL GAY STEREOTYPES!

SAVING THE

SINESTRO IS

MASAY

GAY GREEN LANTERN GAY ... UNIVERSE FROM CONFERENCE

#### Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley

