



Other Viewpoints

Good numbers for drunken drivers

If the statistics hold true, fatalities from alcohol-related accidents in Kansas will drop by more than half in the year since the state imposed a law requiring an ignition interlock for those convicted of drunken driving.

That is outstanding news. The state reported 59 alcohol-related deaths between July 1, 2011, and June 30. That compares with 125 and 137 fatalities for the same time period the previous two years. The latest numbers are expected to increase some, according to a Kansas Department of Transportation spokesman, because the 59 deaths are based on an initial accounting from counties. But the numbers would need to jump significantly in order to meet or top the previous two years.

Other factors also could affect the statistics, but clearly fewer alcohol-impaired drivers are getting behind the wheel, and that fact makes it safer for law-abiders traveling the state's highways and streets.

Lawmakers were forced to act more than three years ago to bring down the state's growing number of deaths related to motorists too impaired to drive. They chose the interlock device, which prevents alcohol-impaired drivers from starting a vehicle.

A report showed that in 2010 Kansas had the second-highest jump in the number of drunken-driving fatalities; New York topped the list. That year most states saw alcohol-related fatalities fall, according to federal data, instead of the 168 fatalities Kansas reported.

The interlock prompts drivers to blow into a device that shows blood-alcohol levels. Those who register below .04 are allowed to drive while those with higher levels are unable to start their vehicles.

The interlock idea and the new law worked, as evidenced by this year's figures. Lawmakers should take the credit for their quick reaction to a horrendous jump in alcohol-related fatalities. Clearly, this is a law that works for everyone.

— The Hutchinson News, via the Associated Press

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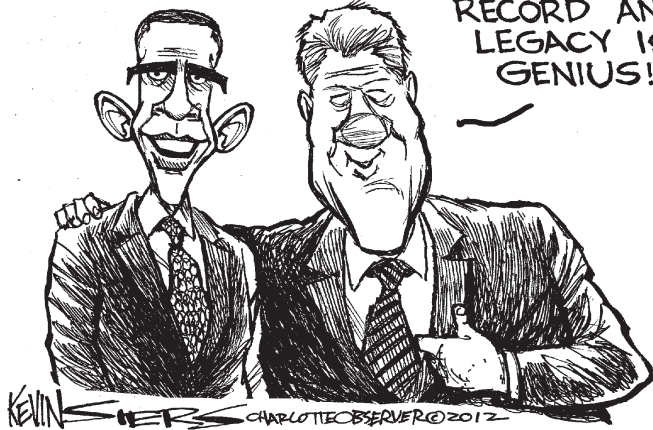
MY CRITICISM OF BARACK OBAMA DURING THE 2008 CAMPAIGN IS ALL FORGOTTEN!



I THINK HIS POUNDING ON BAIN AND WALL STREET IS SENDING THE RIGHT MESSAGE!



HIS DECISION TO HAVE ME SPEAK AT THE CONVENTION AND REMIND VOTERS OF MY RECORD AND LEGACY IS GENIUS!



...DEPENDING ON WHAT THE MEANING OF "IS" IS ...



KEVIN KERS CHARLOTTE OBSERVER © 2012

Senate politics: take aim across the aisle

Republican voters in northwest Kansas got their first taste for the season of "attack" ads a week or two ago when a flier arrived in the mail denouncing state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer. There would be more to come.

The mysterious oversized postcard appeared in mailboxes with no explanation of where it came from. The required "credit" line says the mailing was paid for by the "Kansas Jobs PAC (political action committee), William Wilson, treasurer," nothing more.

No one had ever heard of the committee. State documents online show it was created and registered June 16 with the state Governmental Ethics Commission by Mr. Wilson. The form lists a post office box in Topeka for an address and a phone in the Tecumseh area east of the capital city, most likely someone's home.

The copy is pure political heat: Over a photo of a magician holding a wand above a top hat, the copy says: "State Senator Ralph Ostmeyer is trying to make his votes for higher taxes disappear. Don't be fooled by his cheap political tricks."

The senator did vote for a temporary increase in the state sales tax a couple of years ago when the state was in a real bind. He never tried to hide that vote, however. He says he thinks the more recent votes listed may have been on amendments to bills that might not have passed.

"Tax raisin' Ralph can't be trusted with our tax dollars," the flier says.

Turns out, however, that the groups paying for the flier were among those pushing hardest for the same tax increase.



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

Sen. Ostmeyer said he was puzzled as to who or what group generated the mailing. He estimated it might cost \$7,000 to blanket a district like that. Though the flier sounded a conservative theme, he discounted the idea that one of the many conservative "PACs" had put out the flier.

"I've been endorsed by all the conservative groups," he said. "I'm the conservative in this race."

He speculated that Democrats might want to disrupt the Republican primary, setting up a possible victory in the fall for Sen. Allen Schmidt of Hays, an appointed legislator who has been thrown into Mr. Ostmeyer's 40th District. It turns out, he was not far from wrong; financial reports filed last week showed the "Jobs" group was financed by labor unions, including the Teamsters (\$15,000) and the teachers (\$50,000), and by a "PAC" organized to back liberal Republicans (\$120,000) who control the Senate leadership. At least two other front groups were created to spread the money around, records show.

The senator said he'd checked with Sen. Jay Emler, the majority leader, and he had heard of only one other district where a senator had been the target of a similar anonymous attack.

However, the Jobs PAC financial reports list spending for attacks in at least one or two other Senate races. It gave money to many of the "moderate," or liberal, candidates for the Senate, spent more on support ads.

Sen. Ostmeyer's primary opponent, John Miller, a long-time Norton County commissioner, said he wasn't a whole lot happier about the attack.

"I knew about it when you knew about it," he said, noting that he'd received one in the mail and gotten a phone call the same day.

He said he was campaigning in Logan County when a voter called to say she'd gotten "a postcard from you" that day.

"I just wish people would stay out of this," he said. "Ralph said in the beginning he wanted to keep the primary fair and above board."

"I have no clue (who's behind it)."

However, the "Jobs PAC" reported helping to pay for radio and newspaper ads for Mr. Miller's campaign.

Sen. Ostmeyer said he feared there might be radio attack ads from a similar source in the final days before Tuesday's primary election. A couple more fliers did appear.

Something is wrong when outside forces and outside money attempt to manipulate a legislative race way out here, covering their tracks and hiding their true identity. It'd be a shame to allow anonymous pols hiding behind a postoffice box somewhere in eastern Kansas to sway our decisions.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

Kansas had to cut taxes – here's why

When Jeff Colyer and I took office in January of 2011, tens of thousands fewer Kansans were working in private sector jobs than a decade ago.

Our state was losing residents to all surrounding states. We had the highest taxes in the region and ranked among the worst in private-sector job creation. Something had to be done if Kansas was going to be a place where our children and grandchildren could stay to find a job and raise a family.

When we took office, there was \$876.10 in the state's coffers and a projected deficit for the next fiscal year of \$500 million. Through a combination of fiscal restraint, smart cuts and focusing our resources on the core functions of government, we took that half-billion dollar deficit and turned it into a half-billion dollar surplus. This billion-dollar swing was achieved in one year.

Now that Kansas's economy is getting back on track and we've taken the necessary steps to get the government's fiscal house in order, it was time to take a stand for the future of our state. In May, the Kansas Legislature passed and I signed the largest tax cut in state history, eliminating state income taxes on small businesses and reducing the tax burden on every hardworking Kansan.

From day one, my administration's top priority has been to grow the Kansas economy and create jobs. We had to reverse the trend of capital loss that we were suffering to every state around us and still the tide of rural population decline. This is what we ran for office promising to and we have taken swift and



Sam Brownback

• Kansas Governor

decisive action.

We did this because it was time to shake up the status quo of taxing, spending and declining. In our federalist system, state governments are forced to compete against each other for capital, jobs and residents. Competition offers two options: you can either refuse to adapt to changing conditions and fall behind those who do, or you can lead the way to the future. Kansas had to change the way it competes regionally and nationally for residents and jobs, and so far we have made great progress.

In addition to reducing the tax burden on Kansas families and small businesses, we also improved our economic development toolbox with targeted incentives like letting businesses of any size deduct 100 percent of the expense of new business equipment and machinery. We created Rural Opportunity Zones to help recruit people to counties with sharply declining populations. And we established education programs to increase engineering and tech career students to meet our businesses' future workforce needs.

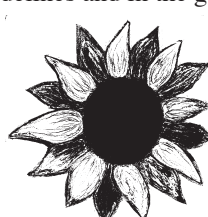
Our new pro-growth tax policy will be like a shot of adrenaline into the heart of the Kansas economy. It will pave the way to the creation

of tens of thousands of new jobs, bring tens of thousands of people to Kansas and help make our state the best place in America to start and grow a small business. It will leave more than a billion dollars in the hands of Kansans – they know far better how to spend their money than the state government. An expanding economy and growing population will directly benefit our schools and local governments.

We will continue to work to provide a business environment that will keep our state regionally and globally competitive. We will continue to reform state government so that it is more efficient, effective and responsive to our citizen's needs. We will continue to meet the needs of our state's most vulnerable. We will continue to provide for high quality schools.

But most of all, we will continue to strive to make our state even better. Kansas' lost decade is over. No longer will we be satisfied with our children moving to another state for better opportunities. No longer will we accept having the highest tax burden in the region. Now is the time to grow our economy, not state government, and that's what this our policies will do.

We are just getting started in Kansas, but we are off the sidelines and in the game.



Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

A NEW TELEPHONE SURVEY INDICATES THAT THE CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ...



...IS PROVIDING AN EVER-INCREASING NUMBER OF AMERICANS WITH THE TIME ...



...TO TALK TO PEOPLE WHO DO TELEPHONE SURVEYS ...

TINLEY 8/2