

## Other Viewpoints

### Disabled deserve shorter waiting list

As the Brownback administration takes pride in fiscal-year-ending reserves, another number looms large and shamefully — the more than 7,000 Kansans with physical or developmental disabilities who are awaiting home- and community-based services.

With such services, individuals can live independently or in homelike residential settings. Without them, they may be forced to move into nursing homes — not only sacrificing quality of life but costing taxpayers far more.

Neither Gov. Sam Brownback nor the Legislature has demonstrated much urgency to better fund disability services and whittle down these lists, although the budget surplus would have made that possible.

The Brownback administration has argued that it inherited the waiting lists from former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, now U.S. secretary of health and human services, and “that merely increasing funding for such services will not solve the problem,” as Shawn Sullivan, secretary of the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, wrote in a May commentary.

Officials also point to reforms coming with the reinvention of Medicaid as KanCare in January 2013, and with the addition to KanCare of the management of long-term care services for the developmentally disabled a year later.

But state leaders soon may be unable to set their own timetable for addressing the lists.

That’s because the U.S. Justice Department has been conducting an investigation into whether the waiting list for individuals with physical disabilities violates the Americans With Disabilities Act and court decisions including the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1999 Olmstead case, which ruled that a disabled person has a right to live in the “least restrictive environment.”

That investigation could lead to a lawsuit, and eventually a costly remedy being forced on Kansas. Georgia has had to spend \$100 million on disability services since 2009 as part of a settlement agreement with the federal government.

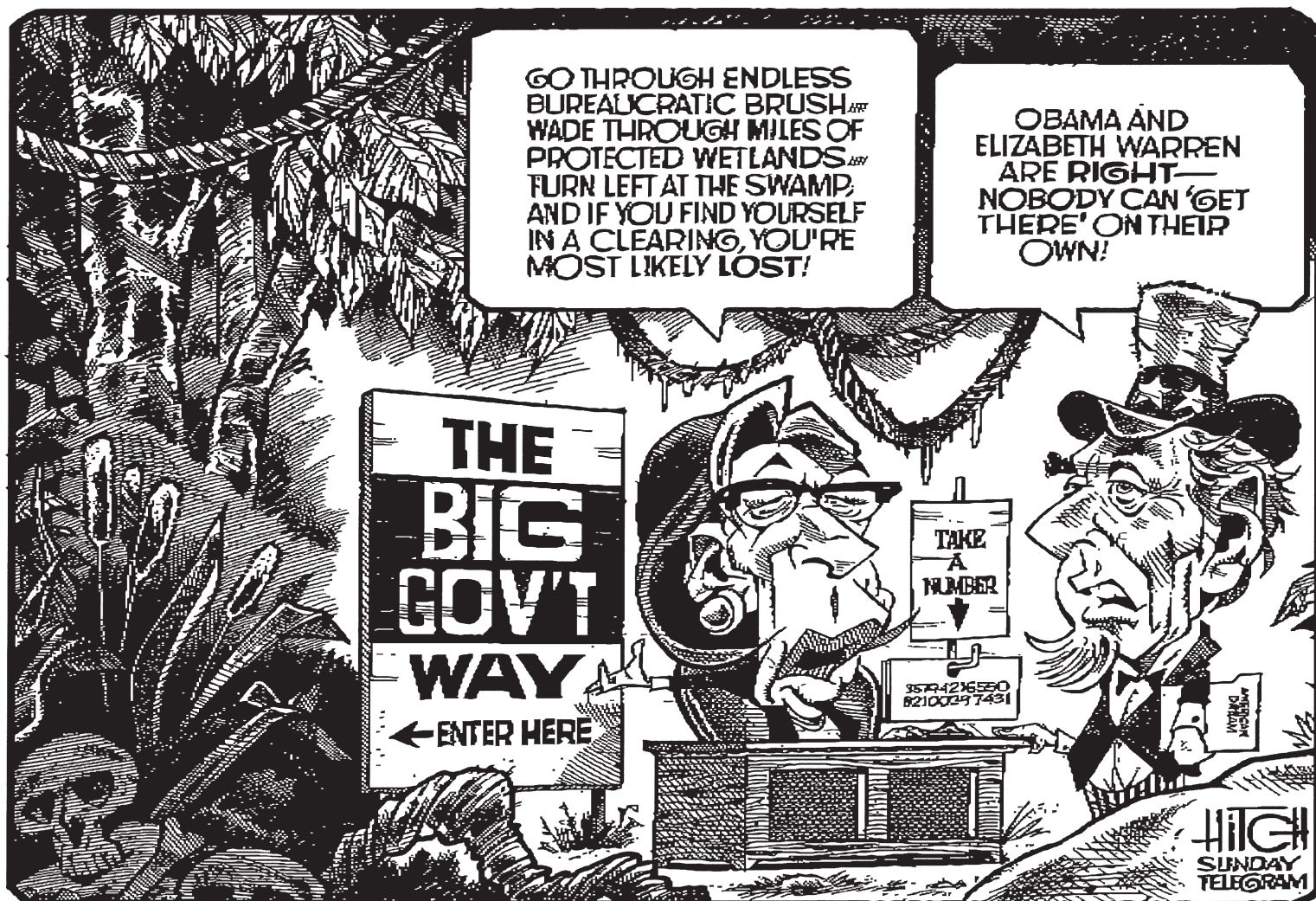
“Wisdom would tell you we should handle this waiting-list issue on our own terms, proactively,” Tim Wood, manager of the Topeka-based Disability Rights Center of Kansas’ “End the Wait” campaign, told *The Eagle* editorial board.

Wood and other advocates plan to ramp up their campaign in time for the 2013 legislative session, looking to a long-neglected legislative blueprint for guidance on how to not only reduce waiting lists but expand and strengthen the home- and community-based services system. Another meeting is planned in Sedgwick County for Tuesday or next Thursday (for information, call (785) 273-9661).

The campaign aims to reduce the waiting list for services for the developmentally disabled, which includes more than 3,200 people without services and another nearly 1,700 awaiting additional services.

The wait averages 30 months but can stretch on for years. Looking the other way won’t make these lists disappear, nor do anything to help the people languishing on them.

— *The Wichita Eagle, via the Associated Press*



### Should corporations have free speech?

What is a person? What is speech? The backlash to Citizens’ United v. Federal Election Commission has been fierce, passionate and misguided.

For those who aren’t familiar with the case, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 vote, ruled that putting limits on the amount of money corporations and labor unions could use for political purposes was unconstitutional.

Liberals are not alone in their antipathy to this ruling; the decision appears to have opponents all over the political spectrum. Underlying this rage is the sad but rational belief that this decision will make a corrupt — some would argue rigged — system even worse.

When so many politicians are perceived, rightly or wrongly, to be influenced more by wealthy donors than by what is in the best interests of the public, a ruling destined to further inundate a campaign finance system already awash with money is bound to be viewed with hostility.

What is disconcerting about the understandable animosity to this decision is the way the argument is being framed by critics. The campaign against the ruling has relied heavily on the argument that “corporations are not people” and “money is not speech.”

On the surface, this may seem reasonable. Most corporations are interested solely in profit, which doesn’t always align with what is best for the community.

But proponents of this argument seem taken with the idea that since corporations are not people, they shouldn’t be privy to the same unalienable rights of individual Americans. This



Andy Heintz

• Wildcat Ramblings

theory is tinged, maybe unconsciously, with more than a hint of political sophistry. While the notion “corporations are not people” is certainly a catchy bumper sticker-worthy slogan, it ignores the potentially dangerous precedent such rhetoric unwittingly promotes.

If corporations are not privy to constitutional rights, does this mean that any corporation — remember that there also are nonprofit advocacy corporations such as the American Civil Liberties Union — that espouses support for universal health care, gay marriage or environmental stewardship can be fined or audited since it isn’t protected by free speech rights? For example, would it be legal for the government to fine businesses that donated money to gay rights and human rights groups because “money is not speech”?

The venerable Glenn Greenwald of the liberal *Salon* magazine offered several imaginary, but plausible, scenarios that illuminated why this attempt to restrict free speech would set a dangerous precedent.

Here is one of Greenwald’s examples: “The FBI enacts an internal policy — and then implements it — which provides any advocacy group incorporated under the laws of

the United States (including the American Civil Liberties Union or Amnesty International) shall have their offices searched, their files seized and their assets frozen each time they use funds from their general treasury for advertisements opposing American wars or foreign policy. Advertisements supporting American wars or foreign policy shall not trigger such actions.”

If you are among those arguing that only individuals are protected by the Bill of Rights and, that money isn’t speech, even if you find this make-believe policy repulsive, how can you declare it unconstitutional without being guilty of a double standard?

I’m not arguing that the Supreme Court’s ruling will not have negative consequences. It probably will give corporations even more power over the laws of the land. But constitutional rights don’t depend on outcomes. For example, speeches by Fred Phelps and his group of followers serve only negative purposes, but they are protected to ensure the rest of the country’s free speech rights will never be in danger.

There is no doubt that our political system has been corrupted by money, but restricting free speech is not the antidote for this problem.

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### Comic relief helps in dry mid-August

The dog days of summer can be trying — especially for farmers and ranchers who are experiencing one of the worst droughts in decades.

A summer like this one brings little rain, grueling heat and fiery winds. The drought and a string of more than 25 days of 100-degree days finished off most of the dryland corn and now have zeroed in on destroying this year’s soybean and milo crops. What will happen to fall-planted winter wheat remains to be seen.

During this period, it’s healthy to interject a little humor into the daily diet. A chuckle or comic relief is good for the mind and body. With that in mind, here’s my offering for the middle of August.

I’ve yet to meet a farmer or rancher that isn’t continually searching for new, innovative ways to make profits. This week, let’s take a peek at the opposite end of the spectrum. Here are 10 sure-fire ways to cut your profit margins.

- 1) Blindly follow seasonal trends or patterns. If the market is going up — do not sell — it may go even higher. If the market is falling — do not sell — it may turn around and rocket back up.
- 2) Never, under any circumstances, trust U.S. Department of Agriculture crop and live-



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• Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

stock reports. From all the information available, these reports are “strictly legit.” But never mind. Disregard these reports at all costs.

3) Blame the big grain companies. Everyone knows they manipulate the farmer and make all the profits.

4) Assume prices and costs are related. No place is it written that because you spend \$1,000 an acre to produce irrigated corn, you are guaranteed a profit on your product.

5) Hold the short crop because less corn, wheat, beans or milo must mean the price of these commodities will increase. In reality, by the time you hear a crop is in short supply, everyone else has heard the same news and the price has already gone up.

6) Follow the majority. If your neighbor sells his corn, it is probably the right time for you

to sell yours, too. Ignore most conversation in the local coffee shop, the town hall or other meeting places. Figure out your own marketing strategy.

7) Ignore the futures market and basis, because everyone knows that a bunch of speculators are rigging the market. Remember, speculators lose money, too, and provide liquidity for the market.

8) Never sell until you have a crop in the bin. Often times, before you harvest a crop is the best time to lock in profits. Take a hard look at future contracting.

9) Always, always shoot for the market high. Smart marketers have abandoned this philosophy for the goal of “shooting for higher.”

10) When all else fails, blame your banker or your wife. You might just want to take a closer look at yourself and your production and marketing strategies.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax

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(202) 225-5124. Web site: [huelskamp.house.gov](http://huelskamp.house.gov)

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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