



## Other Viewpoints

# State government falls short in survey

Legislators and Gov. Sam Brownback ought to spend some time with the 2012 Kansas Speaks survey, which finds Kansans happier with their state than with their state government.

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University has released the scientific survey of what Kansans think about important issues annually since 2009. In a state in which publicly available scientific polling is scant, the survey offers an instructive take on where Kansans stand.

This year's feedback from a survey of 928 Kansans, sends a conflicting message about state spending, with half of Kansans wanting to see it decreased overall but significant support for increasing funding for specific priorities. State leaders will need to reconcile the two views, while dealing with the revenue shortfalls forecast as the new income-tax cuts kick in.

Among the interesting findings:

- 86.7 percent of Kansans view the state as a good or better place to live, while nearly 60 percent take a dim view of their state government.
- About as many (40 percent) are satisfied as dissatisfied with Brownback's performance, though a sizable 27.5 percent are very dissatisfied.
- 30 percent are satisfied by the Legislature's performance – no surprise given the session's fights over redistricting, tax cuts and more.
- 37 percent are satisfied with the efforts of the governor and GOP legislative leaders to help the economy – part of what the survey's authors see as underwhelming support for the huge income-tax cuts.

Most instructive is what the survey says Kansans want:

- Nearly 58 percent want increased funding for schools (about the same as last year); only 8 percent want to see schools cut.
- 47 percent want to see more money for social services, while 35.3 percent call for better funding of higher education.
- Nearly 50 percent consider it extremely important to devote resources to developing wind energy – less than last year but still strong support at odds with the push by Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Wichita, and others to end tax incentives for wind.

The taxation numbers give further food for thought.

Support is strong (52.2 percent) for cutting property taxes, with less interest in cutting income taxes (34.7 percent) and sales tax (30.3 percent). Given that property taxes remain the taxes Kansans love to hate, it will be tragic if the income-tax cuts at the state level force school districts, cities and counties to raise property taxes. But Brownback and lawmakers could find justification in the survey for deciding not to reduce the sales-tax rate; 48 percent say it should remain as is.

Surprisingly for this fiscally conservative state, 55.8 and 57.7 percent favor raising taxes on top earners and large corporations, respectively, while 51.5 percent think taxes should be cut for small businesses.

It's sobering that for three years running, about 70 percent of Kansans have been moderately or very concerned that the economy will threaten their family's welfare.

More than just about anything, Kansans want things to get better. Though that remains a tall order, dependent on both the national election results and the global economy, state leaders should take Kansans' wish as their command.

– *The Wichita Eagle, the Associated Press*

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# Family life in '30s full of hardship

I was born in 1934 in Oklahoma City, and my first breath was probably filled with dust and the smell of cow manure.

That was because my parents, like most people in those days, were flat broke. The only place they could find to live was a small apartment in the top of a barn. My mother told me there were animals in the lower part of the barn and a red Oklahoma dust storm raging outside.

The stock market had crashed in October of 1929. As a result, there were runs on the banks, banks closed and people lost their money. Then the rains stopped, and the drought began. Because of the drought, dust began to blow, crops failed and jobs were lost.

It wasn't long after I was born that my dad got a much-needed job plastering some houses and other buildings in the Thomas County area. Because of that, we moved here, where Mom could stay with her parents, George and Elizabeth Wheaton, while Dad worked. Mom had me and my older sister Shirley to take care of.

The dust storms raged on, and when I was 1, I acquired an infection in the mastoid behind my left ear. Dr. Victor "V.C." Eddy operated on me on my grandmother's kitchen table during a violent dust storm. Mom said they had to hang wet sheets over the windows and doors to keep out the dust during that operation.



**Marj Brown**

## • Marj's Snippets

Shirley had been born in Colby and she was 2 1/2 when I was born in Oklahoma. My younger sister, Elizabeth Ann, was born on May 20 in Colby, just before my third birthday on June 4.

Because we had to follow my dad's work, we returned to Oklahoma City when I was almost 3, and my brother Richard Allen, was born on July 20. We finally returned to Colby for good in the summer of 1947.

Well, I obviously survived and, of course, I don't remember any of those dust storms because I was too young, but I once met a man named Leslie Linville who actually farmed during those days. Linville, unlike most people, had the foresight to sit down at his typewriter and write about them.

I was working at the Prairie Printers Inc. when he came in and asked my boss, Bill James, if he would publish the manuscript he had written about his life. He said he wanted it published so his children would have informa-

tion about his life after he was gone.

Bill agreed to publish the book and I was honored to draw the picture for the book's cover. Because of that, I was given one of the books. There is no date of publication in the book, but I'm guessing it was published around the late 1960s or the early '70s.

Two of the Linvilles' eight children, Harold and Larry, still live in Colby, so I called Harold and he was more than happy to give me permission to use parts of the Linville history book in my column. Harold said he had lost his brother Albert and sister Louise. He also said that his brother Walt is living in Irving, Texas; Maxine is in Mineral Wells, Texas; Don is in Garden City; and Norman is in St. Louis.

I was particularly interested in what Leslie Linville had to say in his book about the "Dirty Thirties" and the Depression days in this area of Kansas. He was a farmer and, like all farmers of that period, went through some miserable times before he was able to get things going in the right direction for him and his family.

I hope all of my readers will be as anxious to read what Linville had to say as I will be to report it.

*Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.*

# Lutherans push back against mandate

I well remember the press questions that greeted me when I became the first full-time Washington representative for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

"So the Missouri Synod has decided to leap into the fray" religion reporters would say.

"No," I replied firmly. "We are trying to keep the fray from leaping onto us."

That the fray has indeed leapt onto the Missouri Synod is shown by the extraordinary testimony last winter of the synod's president, the Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, before Congress. Harrison joined a panel of Catholics, evangelicals, Anglicans and Orthodox Jews to protest the Health and Human Services mandate that requires virtually all Americans to pay for drugs and treatments that can cause abortions. Harrison strenuously resisted this unprecedented infringement of religious freedom.

The Missouri Synod was an early opponent of the Roe v. Wade ruling. Lutheran theology has long recognized and respected the unique role of government. Reformation leader Martin Luther even described the state as the "left hand Kingdom of God."

Because of that exalted role, government should be treated with deference. But, when government does not use its God-given powers to defend the innocent, and instead becomes a terror to those who do right, government abdicates its proper function. Such is the case with abortion. In this instance, government is allowing the slaughter of innocents.

As Americans, we know the Declaration of Independence describes the right to life as the first right endowed by God himself. Further, Thomas Jefferson, as author of that primary document of our national existence, famously said: "The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time."

Americans can also agree with Jefferson's maxim: "The care of human life and happi-

ness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government."

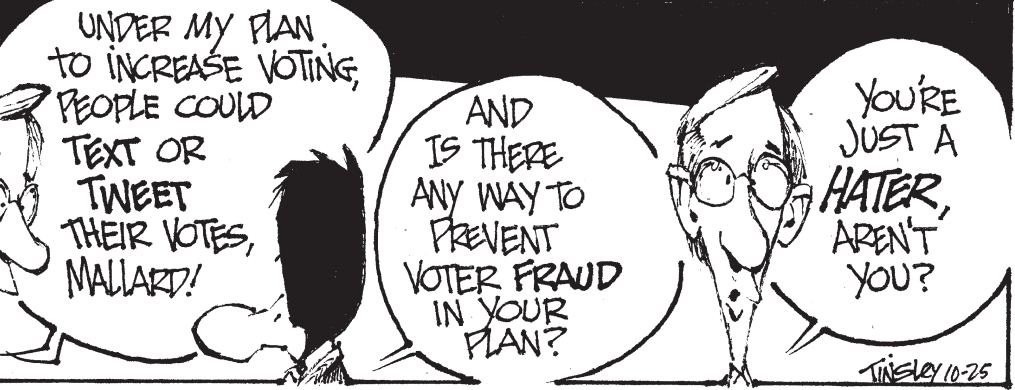
Destruction of innocent human life is what the mandate is all about. To that extent, it is not a legitimate act of government.

The Obama administration's mandate forces Americans, and especially American Christians, to participate in evil. In the *Reporter*, the Missouri Synod's publication for pastors, teachers and church workers, the Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller explains to the laity and clergy of the 2.4 million-member church body that "some of these contraceptive methods and procedures (covered by the mandate) end life in the womb ... they are (thus) in direct conflict with God's Word, which teaches that life is good and should be protected." Wolfmueller strongly states that the mandate violates the Fifth Commandment: "You shall not murder."

Synod President Matthew Harrison and James Sanft, President of the Concordia Health Plan, warn that the founders of the Missouri Synod left their homes in Germany and came to America in the mid-19th century seeking freedom to worship and to practice their faith.

They are ringing the alarm bells once again. The synod has set up a website – [www.lcms.org/freetobeforthful](http://www.lcms.org/freetobeforthful) – to inform its own members and all concerned citizens about the grave dangers to religious freedom they see in the mandate.

James Madison famously said religious freedom would add to the "lustre of our country."



## Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley