

Other Viewpoints

Casinos convenient, gambling help rare

As new casinos pop up in Kansas, access to gambling has become more convenient. Yet efforts to help problem gamblers have been stymied. According to some state lawmakers, the state has improperly spent casino and lottery revenues earmarked for programs to help Kansans with gambling and other addictions. State law requires 2 percent of the state's gambling revenues to be put into a problem gambling fund. Instead, most of the dollars have gone to general government services. Those who'd defend such a move claim the effort to assist people with gambling problems in Kansas has been slow to materialize because the state hasn't identified communities with gambling problems, or identified specifics on how many people have problems, and what those problems may be. Perhaps they should start with a hard look at cities with casinos. The first state-owned casino opened in December 2009 in Dodge City. There's no question the venture – and others to follow in Kansas – were safe bets to put significant funding in state coffers, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars a year. At the same time, there also was no denying gambling would come at a painful cost to many. State lawmakers knew that while Kansas was poised to collect big bucks in gaming tax revenue, the business also would exact a costly social toll in personal financial crises that can lead to crime, bankruptcies and broken families. The deal was to use just a small portion of gambling income for outreach, counseling and help lines for such addiction-related problems. By now, the programs to aid Kansans addicted to gambling should at least be close to meeting existing needs. Yet only about 100 people used problem gambling services available in the first year. Statistics show thousands more in trouble. It's inexcusable to lean on gamblers for significant state funding, then snatch away any meager funding set aside to address problems. More casinos means more gamblers. And, as a result, more people getting in trouble. The state should follow through on its part of the deal, and spend gambling income as required by law.

– The Garden City Telegram, the Associated Press

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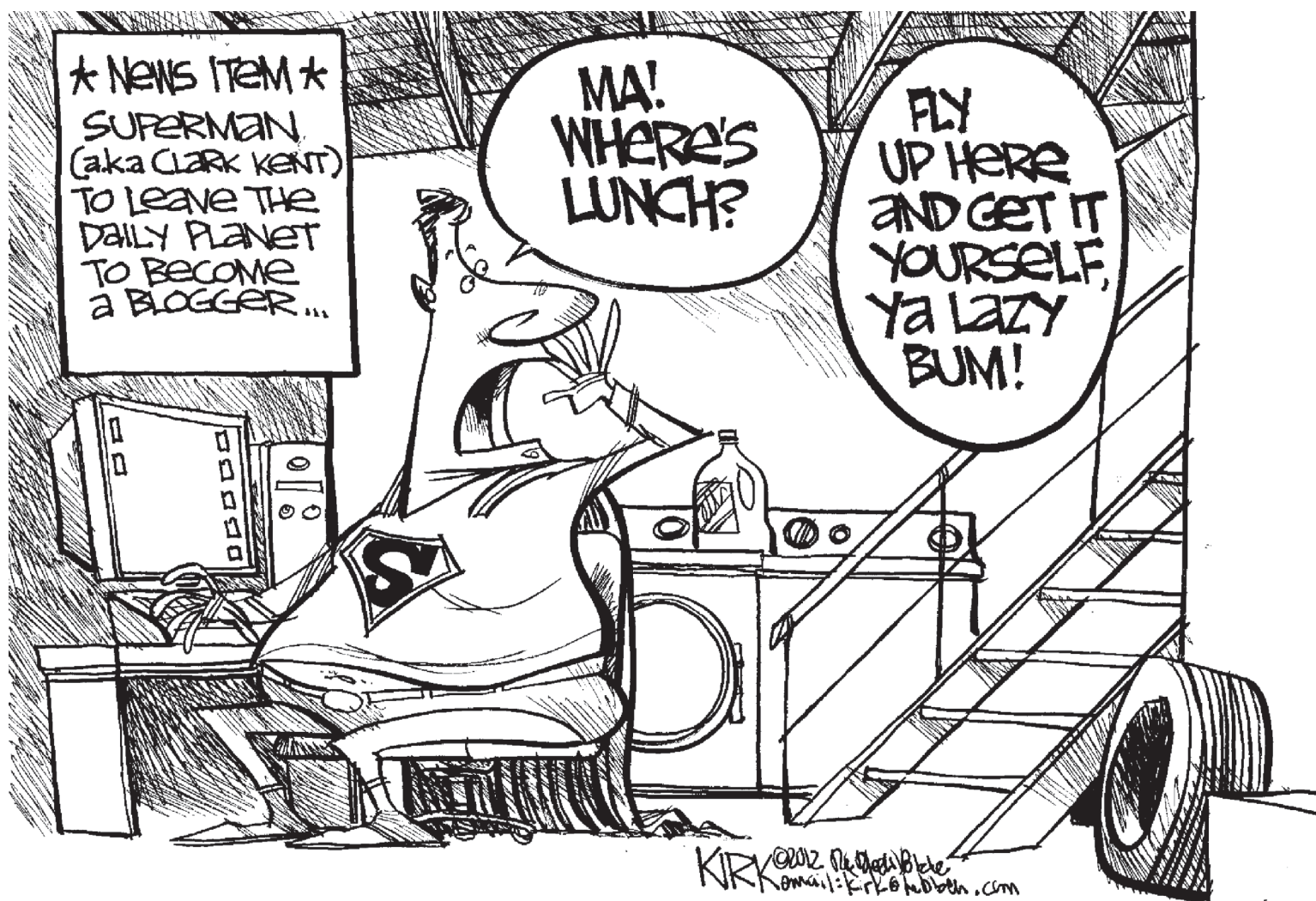
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Americans deserve answers



U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp
 ● Capitol Notes

News of the assassination of America's ambassador to Libya and three other Americans engaged in the diplomatic service of our nation should have led everyone in Washington to seek immediate answers. After all, the rest of the country was hungry for information. Instead, President Obama and others in the administration have given America the silent treatment. The answers they have provided have been incomplete, if not misleading. Two weeks after the attack, the White House continued to cite an amateurish video as the chief motivating factor for the murders. They continued to say there was "no actionable intelligence" about a threat. They continued to say it was spontaneous. They refused to call it a terrorist attack. Sure, President Obama referenced "acts of terror" generally in the Rose Garden the day after the attacks, but he would not call what happened at our embassy a terrorist attack. Meanwhile, the media in New York and inside the Beltway just continue to look the other way. Imagine the (rightful) level of scrutiny that would have been on the Bush administration had this happened under its watch. I suspect nearly every front page, nightly newscast and

hourly NPR update would never cease to cry foul and demand answers about what has the makings of a cover-up. The names and faces of family members whose loved ones were killed in these horrific attacks would be familiar to each of us. President Obama said during the second presidential debate that he takes responsibility for the security failures that led to the attack. But that was only after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton tried to take the fall for him. One would think, though, that when the president is a Nobel Peace Prize honoree, he would be more willing to lead than follow on this critical issue. The time for a full explanation is now, not in a post-election investigation. Americans do not deserve answers about just what happened in Benghazi, but also answers

about why their tax dollars are still going to nations that lack our shared interests. After all, it was just a year ago that American taxpayers spent more than \$1 billion to "liberate" Libya from the Qadhafi regime. In the wake of the attacks on our embassy and diplomatic personnel, I joined my colleagues in supporting legislation to cut off immediately all aid to Egypt, Pakistan and Libya as well as to deny aid in the future to any nations where our embassies are attacked. The funding would not be restored unless and until those nations help bring to justice those who perpetrate violence on our embassies – which are technically sovereign soil of the U.S. Foreign aid represents only a small fraction of our spending, so scaling it back will not necessarily solve America's debt and overspending crisis (though it would be a good start). But cutting off funds to those nations that harbor groups and individuals that seek America's demise will send a clear message that the U.S. is serious about protecting our interests abroad. Congressman Tim Huelskamp, a Fowler Republican, represents the 1st District of Kansas. He serves on the House Agriculture, Budget, and Veterans' Affairs committees.

'Chicago politics' shaped administration

To the editor, President Obama learned to play politics the "Chicago Way." Just look at how he muscled through Obamacare over the objections of the American people – twisting arms and offering bribes behind closed doors. Bypassing Congress, he worked on it for two years – the big-government takeover of our health care. I don't believe that President Obama ever intended to create jobs and reduce unemployment in America. The \$90 billion he put into green energy companies that went belly up went to his core supporters that poured money into this election campaign. This money should have been used for the future of our children and grandchildren. Obama claims to be for the middle class, but he was against the Keystone Pipeline, shutting down gulf oil rigs, not pursuing drilling for gas, oil or oil shale, cutting military expenditures and troops – which didn't create jobs, but put Americans in the unemployment line. Most grievous was the EPA ordering the shutdown of 25 coal-fired plants, which has been delayed until after the 2012 election. This adversely affects miners, railroads and the cost of electricity. The Obama Democrats opted to leave God out of their convention platform. When the issue received news coverage, they voted God back in. It took three votes amidst the "boos" from some of the members. The Obama administration still wants nothing more than to erase Christian values and severely restrict our religious freedom. The election of 2012 is the most important election in American history. Romney's dream is creating jobs, putting Americans back to work, standing up for our freedoms, making our country strong and safe. Obama's dream is to fundamentally change America into a European-style, weak, socialist, welfare country at any price. Pray for our nation and get to the polls. Marilyn Frisbie, McDonald



Free Press Letter Drop
 ● Our readers sound off

Issues of 1912 still matter

To the editor, Unfortunately, Kansas is being overlooked in the presidential race, but things haven't always been this way. A century ago, Theodore Roosevelt came through Kansas, campaigning and receiving support from the nationally-famous newspaper editor William Allen White. In his autobiography, White discussed Roosevelt's campaign: "Our social philosophy simmered down to this: The national income must be shifted so that the blessings of our civilization should be more widely enjoyed than they were.... And the shift or redistribution of national income should be achieved by using government where necessary as an agency of human welfare. Lord, how we did like that phrase, 'using government as an agency of human welfare!' That was the slogan, that was the Bull Moose platform boiled down to a phrase." White also remembered that this platform called for "workmen's compensation laws, for insurance against sickness and unemployment, prohibition of child labor, minimum wages for women, safety and health standards ... and an eight-hour day...." This comes to mind because similar battles are still being fought today – using derisive labels. One Kansas politician has referred to them as "socialist" and an "advance of government tyranny" that has "destroyed our Founders' vision" and threatened "our constitutional form of government." I'm not offended at opposition but I am of-

fended by the use of pejoratives. Opponents are entitled to their perspective, but they need to remember it is Roosevelt, not Taft, who has his face on Mount Rushmore. And name-calling is inappropriate even in junior high schools, let alone in the halls of government. Rev. Andrew McHenry, Emporia

Vote on boat amendment

To the Editor: Vote yes on the watercraft constitutional amendment Nov. 6. The airwaves and our mail boxes are full of information about the candidates in the upcoming election, but this is an important constitutional amendment that – if passed – will allow for fairer taxation of watercraft (boats) and make Kansas watercraft taxation competitive with surrounding states. Some voters may ask, "Why should I care?" Property taxes on watercraft in Kansas are so high they discourage boat ownership, limiting water recreation. Compared to surrounding states, Kansas watercraft taxes are so high many Kansans register their boats illegally in neighboring states, so Kansas counties lose property-tax revenue. The high tax rates also reduce in-state boat sales, affecting marinas and dealers and reducing sales tax revenue. The Legislature showed bipartisan, overwhelming support – 121 to 2 in the House and 40 to 0 in the Senate – for placing this amendment on the ballot. The amendment may be difficult to understand because the ballot includes the entire article of the constitution that is affected. The only change is the addition of the words "and watercraft." Adding just those two words will give the Legislature the opportunity to create a fairer tax treatment of watercraft. This change is good for Kansas and Kansas families, and we encourage you to vote yes on the amendment. Robin Jennison, Topeka Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce Tinsley

