



## Free Press Viewpoint

### Indignation masks failure to answer

Testifying before Congress last week, outgoing Secretary of State Hillary Clinton showed she's mastered the artful lie. Asked once again what happened at the consulate in Benghazi, Libya, the night of Sept. 11 when U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans died in a terrorist attack that apparently took her State Department by surprise, she exploded into indignation.

"With all due respect, the fact is we had four dead Americans," Clinton responded, raising her voice at Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), who continued to interrupt her. "Was it because of a protest or was it because of guys out for a walk ... who decided to kill some Americans? What difference at this point does it make? It is our job to figure out what happened and do everything we can to prevent it from ever happening again, senator."

Well, the secretary might start by answering the question, but notice, she did not.

Guys out for a walk who decided to kill some Americans? Armed with the firepower to storm a U.S. consulate, kill the ambassador and his guards? And how did they know where the ambassador was, anyway?

Let's get real, Madam Secretary. Or should we say, Madam President?

For there's little doubt that Ms. Clinton is quitting the State Department now so she'll have plenty of time to get ready for the 2016 presidential race. Flying around the world for another couple of years might be fun, but presidential campaigns are not built in a day. And she must be presumed the front runner, well ahead of plodding old Joe Biden.

The secretary managed to be indignant enough, almost, to look like the injured party in this sparring. On the defensive for months, she tried to put the other party in a corner.

And she stuck to the administration's line, all along an effort to minimize the attack and make it look like less than it was.

The White House coordinated the story that night and the next day that the deaths resulted from a protest against an anti-Muslim video made by an American and posted on the Internet. Such a protest tied up the streets of Cairo that same day.

But it was apparent from news reports that night that the incident had in fact resulted from a planned attack by trained terrorists who had in mind the death of an ambassador they and their friends blamed for the deaths of many of their ilk. And on the anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in the U.S.

Still, Ambassador to the U.N. Susan Rice was sticking to the official line a week later on the Sunday interview shows. Her loyalty left her out on a limb and may have cost her a shot at replacing Ms. Clinton at State.

And then here was Hillary, telling us it was guys out for a walk, still clinging to the official version.

We all know better. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) may have said it best: "It's been a coverup from the beginning." "It was theatrics," Sen. Johnson said in a later interview. "She didn't want to answer questions, so she makes a big show of it."

Ms. Clinton carries a lot of baggage, but unless the Republicans come up with the kind of candidate they haven't had in more than 20 years, she'll be measuring the White House for drapes. Come to think of it, she used to live there; she may already have the window sizes. — *Steve Haynes*

KEVIN KAMMERER CHARLOTTE OBSERVER ©2013



NOT NOW, HAGEL...!

### Stretch your family's food dollar

As many Americans continue to feel the economic squeeze, they may be eating out less and preparing more meals at home. So, it's more important than ever to grocery shop smart and buy healthy food that fits within a budget.

Public health experts fear lean economic times may mean an already-overweight public may resort to cheaper, high-calorie foods, which can lack important vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients. With a little knowledge and planning, though, this doesn't have to happen.

Helping Americans learn how to stretch their grocery dollars with healthy, nutritious food is the theme of Farm Bureau's Food Check-Out Week, Feb. 17 to 23. America's farmers and ranchers are committed to producing safe, healthy and abundant food. And they share concerns when it comes to putting nutritious, budget-friendly meals on the table.

According to a recent public opinion survey conducted by the American Dietetic Association, 52 percent of consumers are looking for practical tips and that's just what Food Check-Out Week provides. More than 70 percent of American adults don't do more to achieve a balanced diet because they are satisfied with how they eat and don't want to give up foods they like.



**John Schlageck**

• Insights  
Kansas Farm Bureau

Recent U.S. Department of Agriculture food price data show that prices for unprepared, readily available fresh fruits and vegetables have remained stable relative to dessert and snack foods. Translation – the price of a healthier diet has not changed compared to an unhealthy diet.

Learning to use your grocery dollars wisely helps ensure nutrition isn't neglected. Fruits and vegetables – along with whole grains, low-fat dairy products, lean meats, fish, beans, eggs and nuts – are an important part of a healthy diet.

Buying fresh produce when it's in season and costs less, while buying frozen fruits and vegetables when they're not in season, is a smart way to stretch that dollar.

Consumers in Kansas and across this country see a wealth of food products every time they step foot in their favorite supermarket. Yes, today's shopper is fortunate to reap the

benefits provided by America's farmers and ranchers.

Crop and livestock producers are proud of their profession. Nowhere is this more visible than the Midwest and our home state of Kansas.

Our farmers take great pride in producing the cleanest, most abundant crops including wheat, corn, milo and soybeans. In addition, Kansas ranchers produce some of the best cattle, hogs and sheep.

Kansans are also proud that Food Check-Out Week is an idea that originated with Kansas Farm Bureau in 1997. Neosho County Farm Bureau member Linda Reinhart, former chair of the Kansas committee of Farm Bureau Women and the American Farm Bureau Women's committee, thought the concept was important and saw it through to completion.

The story of the American farmer and rancher is truly a success story. Our producers are the most productive in the world. Remember to help celebrate this story and the healthiest, safest food anywhere on the planet Feb. 17 to 23.

*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*

### Judicial selection in forefront this week

**The "Weekly Five Hard Facts"**

- With the current judicial selection process, a small minority of 10,000 Kansans, lawyers who are members of the Kansas Bar Association, have a say in who is nominated to the Kansas Supreme Court or the Kansas Court of Appeals.

- Kansas is the only state that gives the bar majority control in selecting its Supreme Court nominating commission.

- Seventy-three percent of Kansans with income of \$100,000 or more use the mortgage income deduction, while only 17 percent of those whose income is less than \$100,000 use the deduction.

- Big tax credits, such as the real estate tax deduction, encourage home buyers to take out bigger mortgages.

- Data shows states with zero personal income tax significantly outperform states with the highest personal income tax rates.

The pace has increased in this third week of the Legislative session due to the Senate casting its first votes, committees continuing to work on a number of bills and a steady influx of bills making it to the floor for debate.

General Orders in the Senate occurred last Wednesday to debate and vote on legislation. More votes and discussion will occur, as the first deadlines are approaching.



**Ralph Ostmeyer**

• State Senator

**To stay informed on Legislative Issues**  
Legislative Hotline, (800) 432-3924.  
Legislative website: [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org).

**Major Issues This Week**

- Judicial Selection SCR 1601 – proposes to amend the Kansas Constitution to allow for the gubernatorial appointment and Senate confirmation of judges.

- SB 8 is a companion bill which establishes an independent review to help the Senate evaluate judicial nominees.

- SCR 1601 passed by a vote of 28 to 12. SB 8 passed 28 to 11.

- Paycheck Protection for Public Sector Employees (HB 2023), Paycheck Protection Act – to ban state or other units of government from making payroll deductions for members of labor unions for the purpose of contributing to the union's political action committee. Members can still make a contribution by writing a check or setting up an electronic transfer. The House passed HB 2023 68 to 56. The bill is

now headed to the Senate for further consideration.

**ACTION FROM MY OFFICE**

I have had many contacts regarding SB-21. The issues were concerning: reciprocal license standards that match those or are greater than those in Kansas. The second issue was adding to the definition of a firearm so as to include antique firearms.

During committee debate, we split the two subjects of concern: SB 21 addresses the issue of reciprocal license standards. A new bill for the definition of firearms will be sent to the Judiciary Committee.

The Senate and House Education committees have been meeting jointly to get a better understanding of the budget formula and laws governing education funding. Public education funding in Kansas is \$5,771 million a year, and just over half that goes to the classroom.

I will keep you informed of the issues that come before my committee, Federal and State Affairs.

*I can be reached by writing to Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Street, Room 136-E, Topeka, Kan., 66612, or call (785) 296-7399. My e-mail address is [Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov](mailto:Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov).*

### Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774  
[roberts.senate.gov/public/](http://roberts.senate.gov/public/)

**U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966.  
Fax (202) 225-5124 [moran.senate.gov/public/](http://moran.senate.gov/public/)

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

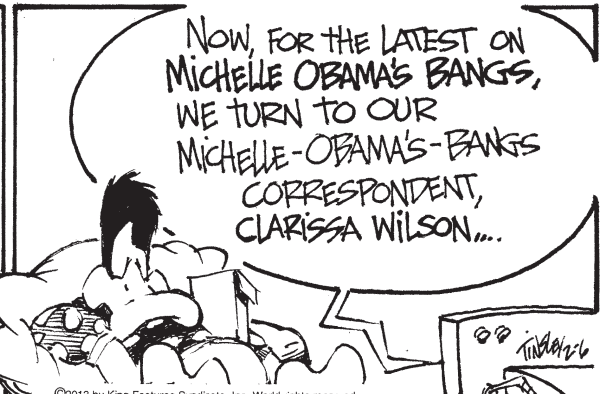
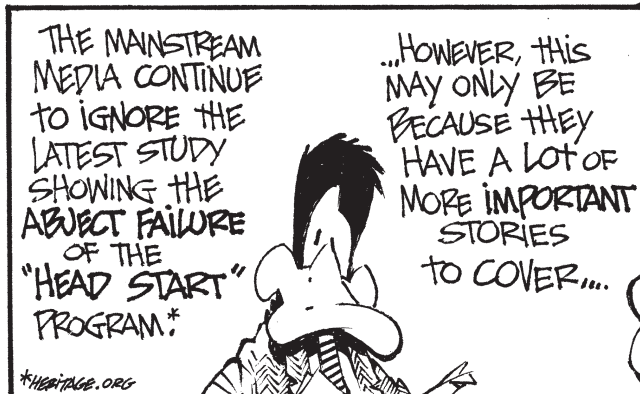
225-5124. Web site: [huelskamp.house.gov](http://huelskamp.house.gov)

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### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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