



## Other Viewpoints

# Abortion bill is cruel overreach

With the passage of an anti-abortion bill on Wednesday, Kansas House members revealed themselves as callous and backward-thinking.

Along with imposing new restrictions on patients and providers, the House rejected an amendment to change current law and allow abortions after 22 weeks if the pregnancy was a result of rape or incest. In rejecting pleas to allow those exceptions, the bill's supporters displayed a shocking lack of empathy for women.

Young girls, especially, may not understand or acknowledge the physical changes resulting from a pregnancy until that pregnancy is well under way. By removing the option of abortion, legislators are imposing their will and beliefs on people in desperate situations.

The bill contains several overbearing and offensive requirements for doctors. The worst is a requirement that physicians must falsely inform patients that abortion may increase the risk of breast cancer.

An abortion-breast cancer link is wishful thinking on the part of anti-abortion crusaders, buoyed by a few small, early studies. Later, more comprehensive research found no connection. In the early 2000s, the National Cancer Institute convened more than 100 leading experts to review the research. They concluded that neither abortion nor miscarriage increases a woman's chances of developing breast cancer.

But Kansas Rep. Lance Kinzer, an Olathe Republican who is the driver of the Legislature's anti-abortion legislation, asserted in debate that the Legislature has the authority to tell doctors what to tell patients, even in the face of doubt or conflicting studies.

Kinzer's thinking is arrogant and harmful. Why would a talented young doctor want to practice in a state that requires physicians to perpetuate a discredited scare tactic?

The 70-page House bill's overreaching effort to deny women the right to a private medical decision even prohibits a woman from deducting the cost of an abortion as a medical expense on her income tax form. Abortion providers could no longer claim an exemption from state sales taxes for medical supplies, as other medical providers do.

In testimony to the triumph of zealotry, the House voted 92-31 for the abortion restrictions. We hope the Senate will show some compassion for young women facing the anguish of an unwanted, late-term pregnancy, and understand the negative consequences of promoting a blatant falsehood.

— *The Kansas City Star*, via the Associated Press

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155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: [colby.editor@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwkansas.com)

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**Sharon Friedlander - Publisher**  
[sfriedlander@nwkansas.com](mailto:sfriedlander@nwkansas.com)

### NEWS

**Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter**  
[colby.sports@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.sports@nwkansas.com)

**Marian Ballard - Copy Editor**  
[mballard@nwkansas.com](mailto:mballard@nwkansas.com)

**Sam Dieter - News Reporter**  
[colby.editor@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwkansas.com)

**Heather Alwin - Society Editor**  
[colby.society@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.society@nwkansas.com)

### ADVERTISING

[colby.ads@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.ads@nwkansas.com)

**Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative**  
[kballard@nwkansas.com](mailto:kballard@nwkansas.com)

**Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design**  
[khunter@nwkansas.com](mailto:khunter@nwkansas.com)

### BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

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[medmondson@nwkansas.com](mailto:medmondson@nwkansas.com)

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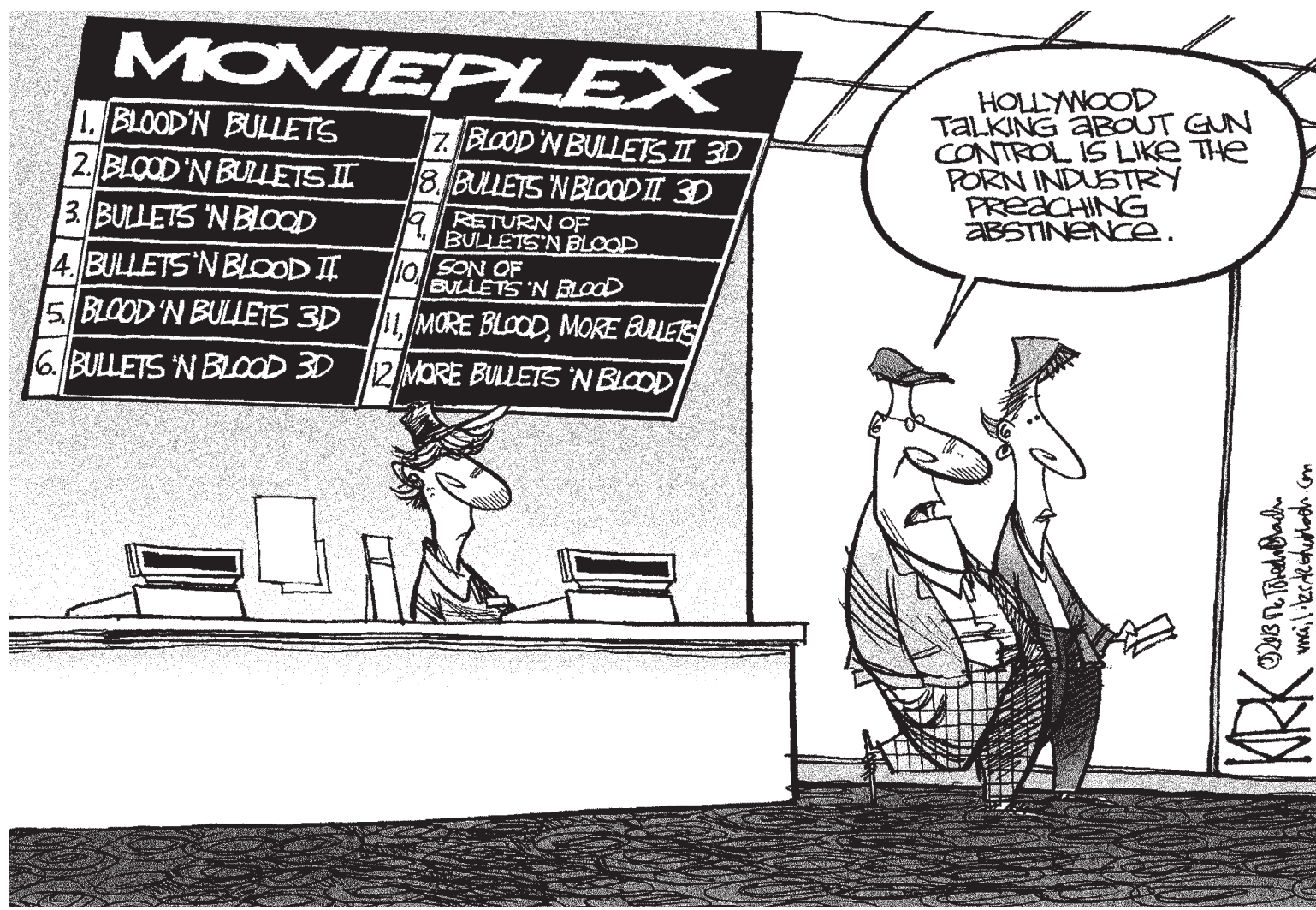
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# Undersung beans worthy of high praise

By Heather Alwin

Colby Free Press  
[colby.society@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.society@nwkansas.com)

Beans have a reputation among adolescents for being the "musical fruit," but they are an economical and healthy way to stretch your grocery dollars while creating filling, tasty meals.

According to Susan Raatz, a research nutritionist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, beans are nutrient-dense, meaning beans provide a high concentration of nutrients per calorie, including protein, fiber, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, lignans, flavonoids and phytosterols.

I don't pretend to know why all of these things are good for me, but the department recommends Americans consume at least 1 1/2 cups of beans each week. By the way, green beans, soybeans and peanuts don't count.

Beans were not a food I made often before I started looking for ways to cut sodium from my family's meals and extend our grocery budget. They always seemed too difficult to cook. I would buy a bag and it would sit there looking at me, daring me to try transforming the rock-like beans into something delicious — or at least edible.

Then, necessity prompted me to try incorporating them into our diet, and I discovered beans were not only easy to cook, but they were also tasty, healthy and — perhaps best of all — cheap! A one-pound bag of beans costs just over a dollar, but it can feed a hungry family even with very little added to it.

Here is my favorite recipe for beans as a main dish. The best part about this method is that you can turn on your slow cooker before you leave for work and come home to a ready-to-eat hot meal.

First, soak 3 cups of pinto beans overnight in enough water to cover the beans by a couple of inches. The next morning, drain the beans, dump them in your slow cooker with enough water to cover them by a few inches and 1/4 tablespoon each of garlic salt, onion powder and cumin. Cook on low for 8 to 10 hours. Served with sour cream, salsa or cheese, these beans make a hearty meal, especially on a chilly day.

As tasty as a beans-only meal can be, I don't want beans as the star of every dish I make. I cook for a meat-and-potatoes family, after all, and we can only eat so many meatless meals. That's where beans are handy as a filler food.

Making tacos tonight? Try mashing a half cup of black or pinto beans to include with your taco meat. You can do the same for

sloppy joes or similar meals, and your family probably won't notice a difference. I've added beans to pot pies, spaghetti sauce, soups and casseroles — often without anyone noticing them. They hover quietly in the background, adding filling nutrition without altering the taste of the dish.

One word of caution, though. Canned beans typically have a much higher salt content than dry beans. To avoid unintentionally increasing your sodium intake while keeping the convenience of pre-cooked beans, you can pre-cook large batches and freeze them.

Simply soak your beans overnight and simmer them on the stove for a few hours the next day until they are just barely done. Let them cool, then scoop them by the cupful into sandwich baggies and freeze. Use your frozen beans just like you would use canned beans but at a fraction of the cost and salt content.

Go ahead, give beans a chance. You and your wallet might enjoy the benefits.

Heather Alwin is the society editor for the Colby Free Press and blogs at [kansaslifewordpress.com](http://kansaslifewordpress.com). Before moving to Kansas, she was a lawyer in the U.S. Air Force. Alwin lives in Brewster with her husband and son.

# How much government is optimal?

A few weeks ago, in his second inaugural speech, President Obama waded into the longest-running argument our history offers.

"Progress does not compel us to settle centuries-long debates about the role of government for all time," he said, "but it does require us to act in our time."

He had just laid out a rationale for government action on infrastructure, protecting the security and dignity of people, climate change, inequality, the strength of arms and the rule of law. Even though he also spoke about limiting government's reach, replacing outmoded programs and reforming its shortcomings, liberals saw the speech as a call to arms, while conservatives cringed.

However you responded, though, there's one point I suspect we could all agree on: This is not a question we'll ever settle. After more than two centuries of discord over the proper role of government, the only consensus we've been able to arrive at as a nation is not to have a consensus.

That's OK, because the issue is never going away. Changing circumstances, new challenges facing the country and shifting national moods will always demand that we rethink what we want out of government. But that is not the same as saying that we can't approach the question more thoughtfully.

If you bring up the issue before an audience, someone invariably quotes Henry David Thoreau's phrase, "That government is best which governs least." Everyone usually nods in agreement.

But Thoreau was writing more than 150 years ago. As appealing as small government might be to the rugged-individualist, market-oriented strain in the American character, talk about it is misleading. The growing number of Americans on Social Security and Medicare; the interest on the national debt; the social safety net; the public demand for regulations

## Other Opinions

### Lee H. Hamilton Center on Congress

that promote safety and well-being, protect the environment and keep rapacious firms in check; the sums we spend on defense and taking a robust leadership role in the world; the government's interest in promoting economic activity, in part by funding infrastructure — all guarantee that the federal government won't be shrinking anytime soon.

This is not to say that government can't be restrained, however. Talking about "limited government," I think, is far more useful these days than about "small government." An energetic government that nonetheless knows how to restrain spending, ensures that regulations are fair, calibrates the tax code so that it promotes economic growth and provides what government needs without stifling initiative and rigorously oversees its own actions to correct slip-ups quickly and ensure they don't happen again — how to create that is worth debating.

Most Americans are uncomfortable with an aggressive, expansive government. They want it to provide the resources for people to solve the problems that confront us, they want it to lay the groundwork for opportunity, they want it to protect liberty, individual freedom and federalism, they want it to keep us secure and they want government leaders to do the best they can — given how limited their control over the economy actually is — to promote economic growth. But they don't want it to take over.

Still, I am concerned by our failure as a country to deal with issues that demand government action: income inequality, poverty, hunger, the lack of access for too many Americans to high-quality education and the sluggish economy. Government can't solve these alone, but we can't solve them without government.

The public sector does a lot of things wrong. It fixates on short-term benefits and ignores long-term costs. It remains slow to act when action is needed. It is reluctant to spend now — as on infrastructure — even when it knows that the longer it delays, the higher costs will rise. It often spends too much and too inefficiently. It fails to reckon early enough with the consequences of its activities.

Yet it is indispensable. So it is high time, I believe, to set aside the black-and-white argument about "big vs. small" government and to adopt a more thoughtful, less ideological approach to the role of government. For those things we want government to do, we should be talking about how a limited government can do them better.

Lee Hamilton is director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

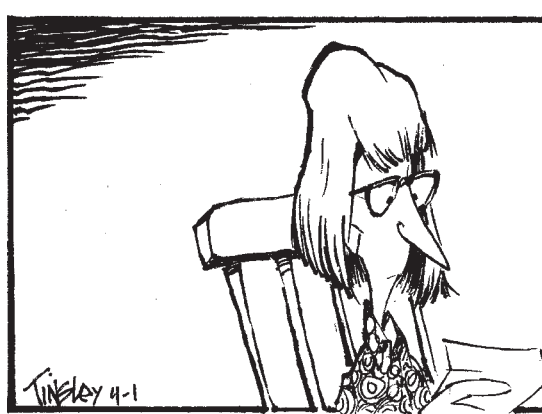
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## Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley



Dear Ms. Haversperger,  
Your son Jack is constantly bullying children smaller and weaker than he is. I think he may have a bright future working for the TSA...