



Free Press Viewpoint

School suit faces a different climate

The Kansas Supreme Court heard arguments in yet another school-finance lawsuit this month. A decision is expected sometime after the first of the year, and it's anybody's guess what the judges will do.

Many expect the court will rule against the state again, as it did in the Montoy case six years ago. The price tag then was something under \$1 billion, which the Legislature ponied up at the time.

Things are different today. Conservatives opposed to that kind of spending are firmly in charge of the Statehouse. The courts have been under attack, with Gov. Sam Brownback winning authority to appoint new judges to the state Court of Appeals, bypassing a commission made up mostly of lawyers who used to decide on the nominees.

And while the price tag this time is "only" about \$440 million, the state doesn't have the money – not without undoing some of the tax cuts enacted by the governor and Legislature last year.

Big-government, big-spending backers decried those tax cuts last year, but they are in place today. And there is no telling whether the Legislature would reverse course just because the judges say so this time.

The result could be a standoff, a "constitution crisis," between co-equal branches of government in Topeka. No one knows who'd win. Or if the judges of the high court want that kind of confrontation.

These school suits are nothing new. Kansas has been faced with them for some 40 years, the Associated Press reports. They are common in other states as well. Most often, they result in more money being spent on schools, which already consume half our state's budget. But when one program comes out a big winner, others, from highways to state colleges, must be on the losing end.

It's hard to say just how much schools actually need. No one knows for sure, though the 2006 Supreme Court decision was based on a study paid for by the Legislature – much to the leadership's later regret.

What happens is, if schools don't get what they want, school boards get together and finance a lawsuit – with taxpayer money – to force the state to spend more. Attempts to outlaw using state money to sue the state have failed, despite many complaints about the practice.

Sure, many school administrators and teachers would like to have more money to spend. Wouldn't we all? But school money has to come from taxpayers, and for the most part, they've been saying they pay too much already.

That cry was seldom heard until the present administration, which actually cut state spending for the first time in decades last year. The Legislature slashed taxes, a move that was much decried by those who like to spend tax money, and those who benefit, such as the teacher unions.

Will the lawsuit change all that? Stay tuned. The first of the year is not far off. – Steve Haynes



Remember how we use to do things?

While we were on our way to Arkansas a couple of weeks ago, my sister and I started talking about what you used to be able to do that you can't do now.

She told a story, related by her mother-in-law, of her husband, who at the age of 16 was driving a school bus to pick up the youngsters in his area of rural Kansas. Down in Arkansas, our cousin George, who is 70, said that he remembers being on a school bus driven by a high school-age boy when he was a student.

Can you imagine a 16-year-old taking a school bus around today? It would be a statewide, if not nationwide, scandal.

Still neither my brother-in-law nor cousin George could recall any accidents, and these boys drove in all kinds of weather, because in those days, they didn't cancel school every time there was half an inch of snow. If the roads were slick, you drove slowly and there weren't dozens of other vehicles on the roads. Don't ask me how that led us to hot dogs.

I asked George if his mother had boiled the hot dogs when he was a boy.

Oh, yes, he said. That's the only way his mother, our Aunt Adele, or our mother, or anyone else ever cooked them. You tossed the hot dogs into a pot of water and cooked them until they split.

We would sometimes roast them over an



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

open fire when we were camping, but barbecues were rare and we were probably in our teens before we had a roasted hot dog.

Of course there was a little device Mom bought that basically electrocuted the wiener. You put the hot dog between two probes, closed the lid and plugged it in. In just a few minutes, the dog was cooked to a turn – no boiling water needed. Mom loved it.

My sister remembers it as similar to those gadgets you find in stores marked "As seen on TV." I think that's about right. It was a one-trick gadget that was fun for awhile and then got put on a shelf – sort of an early chocolate fountain.

I was surprised when George said that another thing you don't see anymore is people paying with cash. He said he remembers the Army paying troops off in cash each month.

Now, George graduated from West Point in 1966 and rose steadily through the ranks until

he retired as a three-star general about 10 years ago, so I was not surprised that he had been the head of a company (I'm not sure how many) of soldiers in the late 1960s and early '70s. However, I was amazed that the Army still paid in cash that late in the game.

Today, I'm sure that the Army doesn't even hand out checks, much less cash, but George said he remembers going down to the payroll center once a month and being handed a box of cash. He remembers it as being about \$10,000, a small fortune in those days. He had to sign for it and could count it or not as he pleased.

"I always counted it," he said, "and as I counted, I put it in envelopes marked with each soldier's name. That way when I was done, I knew the amount was correct and that each man would get the correct pay."

Wow! Shades of westmen, when they stopped the train and stole the Army payroll.

Yep, times have changed, some for the better, others maybe not so much, but at least the hot dogs are better from the microwave.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkans.com

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He fears government shutdown of future

The likelihood exists that before this column is read the Republicans in both the House and Senate will have compromised themselves out of any real resistance to Obamacare. The House of Representatives first voted to fund the entire government minus Obamacare on Sept. 20.

It moved next to delaying it one year for everyone – not just Congress, the unions and big business – to make it fair. The House then moved to delay the individual mandate for a year plus make Congress live under the same law, rescinding the exemptions promised them earlier by President Barack Obama to entice them to go along.

The House then abandoned its original cause, defunding Obamacare. To counter the blame given them for the shutdown by the openly hostile press they next funded 11 critical functions of the government. Harry Reid and Senate democrats rejected everything.

That Republicans caved in so easily and that the Democrats would not buy into the fairness argument (historically their strongest tenet – fairness) is disturbing, but three other areas are even more so. First of these is the blatant media bias in favor of one party and the Senate and the universal villainization of the other party and the House in their non-neutral coverage. All pretense of neutrality is gone.

Second, the damage to the U.S. Constitution, which gives clear direction on this issue, that was ignored by the Senate and now also by the House, who should be most protective of this power.

"All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House." By refusing to honor this clear constitutional prerogative of the House as the only body that can initiate taxes, which includes defunding originally funded items, such clarity is lost and the Constitution is damaged.

The third, and far more disturbing result of this battle, is that our spending addiction

Other Opinions

• Harold Pease
Liberty Under Fire

will never be solved and this inability heralds the likelihood of a future complete fiscal collapse of our economy and probably that of the world, as they are so dependent upon our dollar. A position once considered too extreme to voice I now hear everyday. If our leaders were intentionally making choices to collapse the economy how would they differ from those they now make?

Almost all evidence shows that Obamacare is going to be far more costly than promised with no real evidence that it will be any better for the vast majority. Our national debt rises between three and four billion dollars a day. Even as I write this column the President is proposing a debt-ceiling raise of a million dollars per minute. He, and the Republican House of Representatives are responsible for seven trillion of our now-17 trillion dollar debt. Before he leaves office he will have increased our national debt equal to the debt remaining unpaid by all previous presidents combined, and yet half of our folks remain mesmerized by his promises.

The debt ceiling has been raised 74 times since March 1962 – 18 times under Ronald Reagan, eight times under Bill Clinton, seven times under George W Bush, and five times under Barack Obama. This is our 12th debt raise in 12 years. We raise it every year to accommodate our need for a "fix." Congress sadly never says no. Does anyone really believe that our debt-addicted government will ever

stop the addiction on its own? Fully a third of our population do not earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, but vote to get the government to take it from someone else's labor and give to them. Those receiving food stamps are now a third of our population, having doubled under Obama's watch.

Yes, we have a two-class society – the takers and the contributors. Takers will always vote for those who promise them more. When that number exceeds 51 percent we will never escape the takers and will have effectively made the contributing class the new slaves.

So go ahead and tell me that after the Democrats win this debt crisis, their seventh time under Obama, that they will spend less hereafter. Tell me that those who receive free cell phones or food stamps or other government handouts will wake up and see the damage being done to this country. Tell me that they will vote for a party or individual that advocates first reducing, then eliminating, these and other well meaning but bankrupting programs. The Tea Party provides the only resistance to this self-destructing philosophy and look at how the media and both parties vilify them.

When the real government shutdown comes, and it surely will unless we quickly change direction and get back to the Constitution, we may not have a President, Congress or Supreme Court. For a time we may have real anarchy, hunger and bloodshed. And most likely the Constitution, now shredded by both parties, won't be able to save us from ourselves. Would to God we wake up in time to "sober up" and make serious spending cuts.

Dr. Harold Pease has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying them to current events. He has taught history and political science for 25 years at Taft College. To read more of his articles, go to www.LibertyUnderFire.org.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

