



Free Press  
Viewpoint

Special interests  
are strongest critics

Gov. Sam Brownback seems to be under fire from every which direction.

His moves to slash the state’s income tax – while extending a sales-tax increase passed by a Democratic governor – cut state spending, trim the fat out of state agencies and programs and generally make government work may or may not be popular.

But one thing is sure: Brownback has drawn the enmity of nearly every pressure group representing those who spend state money or draw a state paycheck, and from many who just think more state spending is a good thing.

In his first two years in Topeka, the governor found many of his initiatives frustrated by holdover “moderate” Senate leadership that blocked his cuts and programs at seemingly every turn. The governor and his conservative backers turned to voters statewide, targeting this group. Nearly all of them were turned out in races that often involved established conservative members of the House with money from conservative groups.

Even so, the 2013 state budget, adopted last year, cut state spending by \$465 million, or about 3.2 percent, the first time the state spending hadn’t gone up in decades. This year, with solid conservative majorities in both houses, the Legislature cut spending even beyond what the governor proposed. Colleges particularly felt the knife.

All that has left the governor with more critics than friends, or at least, it seems that way. He’s drawn fire from statewide associations of teachers, school boards, families of the disabled, colleges, county officials, you name it. No group represents just ordinary voters statewide, however, and there’s not much of a read on how they feel about his tax and spending cuts.

But groups of all sorts have been touched by the cuts, and many don’t like them. Editorial writers for major newspapers uniformly panned the Brownback agenda and both the tax and spending cuts. Many refer to claims that his income tax cuts favor the rich while programs for the poor have been cut.

The *Topeka Capital-Journal* did praise the governor for stemming the growth of state spending, but most of the major papers, from *The Kansas City Star* to the *Hutchinson News* and the *Garden City Telegram*, have had far more to say about the cuts. Even the *New York Times* chimed in, advising the state’s high court on the school case.

Much of what’s been written has been speculation that the tax cuts are unfair, the income-tax cuts in particular will fail to stimulate the economy and there will be no money if the state Supreme Court orders the state to spend millions on schools, restoring cuts made under former Gov. Mark Parkinson.

All the criticism may be taking its toll. An early poll by a Wichita television station showed the governor trailing would-be Democratic challenger Paul Davis, the House minority leader. However, political experts interviewed by *The Star* suggest that the governor will run a better race next fall.

A real unknown is what will happen in House races. The entire House has to run for re-election every two years, unlike the Senate, which has four-year terms. If the anti-Brownback crowds get behind candidates in House races, it might be able to cut into the conservative majority there, if not prompt a takeover by more-liberal leaders.

But it’s way too early to predict any of that. Or to forecast the governor’s demise. We’ll just say it could be a far more interesting fall than most in 2014. – *Steve Haynes*

COLBY FREE PRESS

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

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Sharon Friedlander - Publisher  
sfriedlander @ nwkansas.com

NEWS

R.B. Headley - Sports Editor  
colby.sports @ nwkansas.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor  
mballard @ nwkansas.com

Sam Dieter - News Reporter  
colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

Heather Alwin - Society Editor  
colby.society @ nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING

Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative  
kballard @ nwkansas.com

Sharon Funk - Advertising Representative  
sfunk @ nwkansas.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design  
khunter @ nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager  
medmondson @ nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator  
support @ nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager  
Gary Stewart, Foreman

Jim Jackson, Jim Bowker, Pressmen  
Kris McCool, Judy McKnight, Tracy Traxel,  
Sheri Arroyo, Mailing

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



Sometimes waiting pays off

My son is the laid back one of the family.

While the girls, Steve and I are all type-A personalities, driven workaholics, in other words, our son takes things as they come and deals with them as he goes along. The rest of us grab 'em by the throat, then stampede on to the next thing.

I started to realize how methodical and far-sighted our son is when I looked around his kitchen during our visit there last week. We went to make him an early Thanksgiving meal and Steve's brother and sister joined us in the feast.

Son lived in an efficiency apartment with an air mattress for a bed for two years while he saved his money for a down payment on the little 107-year-old home he now owns.

His new home had a nice refrigerator, a dish-washer and even a stacked washer and dryer, but there was no stove when he moved in, just hookups for both gas and electric feeds near a stove-shaped spot on the wall.

One other thing was missing from the kitchen. While the cabinets were nice, there was not a drawer in any of them – just shelving.

When he moved in, he had hundreds of boxes of stuff that had been stored in a friend's garage. He moved it into the little pantry behind the kitchen and started unpacking.



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

Out of the boxes came the finest in kitchenware – fancy pots and pans and a hanging rack to hold them, beautiful hand-painted dishes imported from Tunisia, a complete set of professional-grade bar ware, glasses for all occasions and even a miniature theater-type popcorn popper.

Still, for the next eight months he cooked using his microwave and a hot plate. The hole in the kitchen where the stove should have been stayed just that.

He was saving his money, he said, to buy the gas stove he wanted. He did, however, buy a utility cabinet with drawers that matched his kitchen.

Eight months after moving in and a week before an accident which put him out of work for almost five months, he ordered the stove. It was a fancy, fairly expensive gas stove.

It came while I was at his house, helping

him get around after losing parts of two toes to a lawnmower.

It was a purchase he would not have been able to make after the accident. He looked like he didn't know whether to be glad or sad that he had ordered and paid for it just before he needed every penny to just live and pay his medical bills.

This month, we knew he was glad. We baked and cooked on the new stove, using his fancy pots and pans, and served the meal on those beautiful plates.

While I would have bought the cheapest stove I could find and lived with it for the next dozen years, son knows what he wants and is willing to live without it until he can save the money to buy the perfect thing.

He's back to work now, and seems to enjoy his new job, and knowing him, he's methodically paying off his medical expenses and probably saving for the next big thing in his life.

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 @ nwkansas.com

Give thanks for local businesses

In his Thanksgiving proclamation, President George Washington began with the following words:

“Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits and humbly to implore His protection and favor.”

This week, we should stop and give thanks to God for the many blessings we enjoy as Americans. I am thankful that despite the policy failings in Washington, we still live in the greatest nation on the face of the earth.

After gathering with family and friends to celebrate traditions, make memories, and give thanks this week, your mind may shift to Christmas shopping. As you do, I want to call attention to key members of the small towns we call home – our small businesses. Not only do small-business owners create jobs across the 1st District, but they are often our community leaders and our little-league coaches as well.

Most small businesses employ fewer than 10 people. Many small business owners do their books late at night at the kitchen table after their kids have gone to sleep. They do not have an army of lawyers, accountants and lobbyists to keep up with all of the changing rules



U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp

• Capitol Notes

and regulations coming out of Washington.

And far too often, Washington is more interested in what happens on Wall Street than on Main Street. And that is just backwards. Small businesses account for about half of the total economic activity in America. They create nearly two out of every three new jobs. They have historically led our nation back from recession.

Strengthening our small businesses is vitally important to get our economy moving forward and putting millions of Americans back to work, many of whom have given up on finding a full time job.

As a member of the House Small Business Committee, that's why I am sponsoring a bipartisan resolution in Congress to call attention to the importance of small businesses in our communities. It would denote the Saturday after Thanksgiving as “Small Business

Saturday.” It is only a symbolic measure, but it would serve as a reminder as to how important our small businesses are to our nation.

I also encourage you to join me in doing something more than symbolic. After giving thanks on Thursday, please join me in shopping at a small business this Small Business Saturday. These businesses, their owners and employees, are the backbone of our American economy. Not big businesses. Not special interest lobbyists. And certainly not Washington.

May God bless and protect you, your family and our entire nation, both on Small Business Saturday and the entire year.

Congressman Tim Huelskamp, a Fowler Republican, represents the 1st District of Kansas. He serves on the House Veterans' Affairs committee.

Write us

The *Colby Free Press* encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author. We do not publish anonymous letters.

Mallard  
Fillmore

• Bruce  
Tinsley

