

from our viewpoint...

Using tax money to sue should stop

A good idea: change the law so one government unit can't spend taxpayers' money to sue another government entity for money. And make darned sure that no subdivision of the state can sue the state for money, financing that whole thing with state tax money.

That's what a Wichita-area legislator, Sen. Dick Kelsey of Goddard, proposed last week as Kansas faced another round of school lawsuits financed by tax dollars on both sides. Kelsey happens to be running for Congress, but that does not mean he can't have a good idea.

What it comes down to is you, the taxpayers, paying to sue you, the taxpayer, to force you to cough up more money for schools.

So let's start by asking, do you want to pay for any of this? No?

We didn't think so.

So maybe Sen. Kelsey is on to something here.

Four years ago, in a brazen power grab, the Kansas Supreme Court heard the original "Montoy" school case and ordered the Legislature to come up with nearly a billion dollars more for schools. Never mind that the Legislature, not the courts, is supposed to decide such things as spending levels and tax rates under the constitutional division of powers.

Worse yet, the Legislature caved in and agreed to find the money. But that was then. Now, the state is nearly broke, tax collections run under estimates nearly every month, and the Legislature and governor have spent the better part of two years cutting the budget for all programs.

Should schools be exempt?

The group called "Schools for Fair Funding," led by a group of sharp lawyers who always make money on these cases, says they should. They've ask the Supreme Court to reopen the Montoy case and find that the Legislature needs to dig up that billion.

Many of those who will spend this money, school boards and school administrators, say they need it, or children's educations will suffer. Teachers certainly want to see the money come through.

We know schools have needs, but at what price to the rest of the state? Cut colleges and highways even more? Raise taxes with thousands unemployed? Those are tough choices, questions that only the elected Legislature and governor should answer.

But above all else, how is it fair to use taxpayers' money to pay for a suit against the state?

We hope Sen. Kelsey's measure becomes law. We think he's right.

His measure will not protect the state from being sued. Anyone with an interest could file a similar suit, using money donated by school board members, administrators or the teachers' union, say, but it would save the rest of us from paying to sue ourselves.

Let's hope this passes. — Steve Haynes

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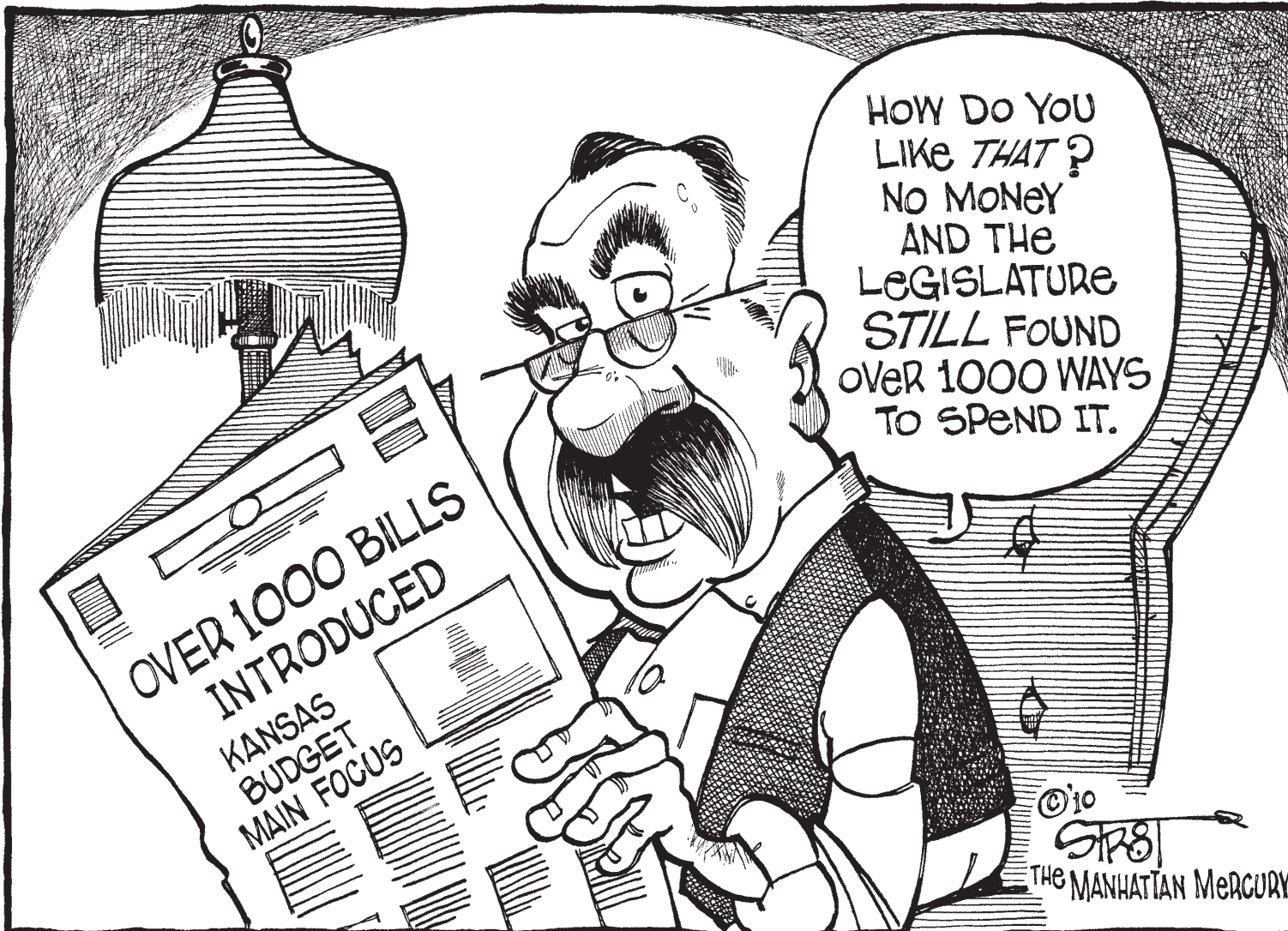
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I got her to wrap her baby's present

I cheated out last week and ended up making the guest of honor wrap her own present for a party.

It all started out innocently enough with a baby shower invitation for my youngest daughter. Her sister is giving the shower to celebrate our first grandchild. Unfortunately for me, it will be held where they live, in Augusta, Ga.

I responded to oldest daughter, and she wasn't a bit surprised I wasn't going to make it. Neither daughter had expected me, but they both knew I wanted an invitation to the shower.

I had already decided on my present, sheets to go on the Pac-N-Play combination playpen and portable baby bed that we had already bought for the new grandchild.

I had to go on-line to purchase the sheets at the Babies R Us web site. Man, I hate to shop on line. It's so impersonal, so mechanical, so dull. Still, the only way to get the sheets was visit one of the specialty stores or go on line. Since driving four hours to shop wasn't an option, I got out my computer.

The sheets were \$9.99 apiece or a set or a whatever, and I ordered two — one yellow, one green. At the checkout button, they added the delivery charge and asked if I wanted my



cynthia haynes

• open season

purchase gift wrapped. Of course, I wanted it wrapped. It's for a baby shower!

I hit the button and was told that on top of the \$19.98 for the sheets, \$2.87 for tax and \$6.10 for shipping, I would be charged \$4.99 per sheet to have the gifts wrapped.

Ten bucks to wrap a couple of sheets? Couldn't they do it as one package? I would pay \$5, but not \$10. That was outrageous!

I canceled the gift wrap and added a package of cloth diapers that the expectant mother also wanted. The diapers were \$2 more than the gift-wrap service, but I felt better about spending my money on them.

The next step was where to ship them.

They could come to me and I could wrap them and send them on. That sounded like a lot of work.

They could go to my older daughter, the hostess. That sounded like the best bet, but oldest daughter was already overseeing the

party and is well known in the family as the person to most likely order your present on line. That girl is more connected to the Internet than Steve Jobs. Besides, most importantly, I didn't have her address on me and no, I don't have it memorized.

So the third option was to have them sent to the almost-new mother.

I called youngest daughter and gave her these orders:

"Lindsay, my love. I purchased the sheets for that play-pen thingee Daddy and I got you. They'll be delivered to you.

"You are to wrap them in appropriate paper and give them to your sister. When it's party time, you will unwrap your presents and exclaim over them suitably."

She didn't blink an eyelash.

"Right, Mom. I got some blue paper with yellow duckies on it that I used on Sandy's present two years ago. I bet nobody will remember it."

"Since I'm not paying to have the presents wrapped," I said. "I bought a package of cloth diapers instead. You can wrap them or not as you please."

"Oh goodie," she replied. "This baby thing is getting kind of expensive."

Oh baby! You ain't seen nothin' yet!

Shocked by trial coverage

To the Editor:

I am shocked and appalled after reading about half of the headline story in the Friday, Feb. 5, issue of *The Goodland Star-News* titled "Courtroom drama unfolding." I understand this "courtroom drama" is considered news in a small town such as Goodland. I also understand that our community is not immune to such horrific incidents.

However, I say shame on *The Goodland Star-News* reporter, Ava Betz, for including the sexually graphic details of this despicable situation.

My husband and I have always encouraged our children to read the newspaper to stay informed of local news and events. But this edition went straight to the trash where it belongs!

Please show respect for your reading audience, but more importantly show respect for the children of the family involved in this trial.



from our readers

• to the editor

They do not need to have the graphic details of this situation smeared throughout the community in which they live.

Laurie Klemm
Goodland,

To the Editor:

I had a wonderful surprise last Sunday evening about 8:30 p.m. I heard a knock at the door and standing there was a young man I had made friends with while he was attending the Northwest Tech College Welding Department.

I had not heard from him for about a year. Sometime in late November of 2008, I had



tom dreiling

• time out with td

up their sleeves so they at least look like they are working, brought this comment, "If members of Congress dressed to reflect their true character, they'd be wearing orange jumpsuits and manacles...and dunce caps." My feedback line is: tad1@st-tel.net.

-td-
OK, so what was my super bowl meal this year? I went into my old family cookbook and after looking over a number of possibilities I settled on noodles and beans. Yep, noodles and beans — like Mom used to make them. Of course family members reading this will probably debate that "like Mom used to make" statement,

I boiled water in a two-quart saucepan on the stove, poured in a healthy serving of noodles and let them boil to tender. While doing that, I took a skillet, rubbed butter (or whatever they call the stuff these days) around the interior, then turned the control up to #5 and let the butter heat and eventually form a few bubbles here

called the College to see if they had someone who could come and put up my outdoor Christmas lights. The young man was sent to my home, and in short order, the decorations and lights were installed.

We became good friends, and I did what I could to help him as much as I could. Then things started happening in his life, and not for the best. At that time I was unable to keep in touch, so I turned him over to the Lord in my daily prayers.

To see him last weekend was amazing. I met his wife and heard about his two children, and that he is employed in the trade he studied for.

After they left to drive to Colorado, I felt humbled and proud that whatever I had done for him and the prayers I offered had made me stronger in my faith. We do have an awesome God, don't we?

Roger Collins
Goodland

School, honor roll receive thumbs up

and then. When that occurred, I took a couple pieces of white bread and tore them into small piece and dropped them into the bubbly butter. When they were pretty much browned, the noodles were ready so I drained them and then poured them over the bread pieces and mixed the noodles in with the bread slices, while also dicing just a tiny bit of onion in also.

While that was going on in the skillet, I put a can of Bush's (not George W's) large butter beans in another saucpan and let them heat up. When all was done, I spread the noddles and bread bits over a plate, scooped a good portion of butter beans on top, flavored it with just a tiny sprinkle of vinegar and sat down to a meal fit for a king.

Oh, I had a side dish of cottage cheese. Yummy! Yummy!

Let's see, Dreiling/Eichman, that sounds German, right?

-td-

Congratulations to the New Orleans Saints on their 31-17 Super Bowl 44 victory over the Indianapolis Colts! Sweet!

-td-

Have a good evening. And it's still not too late to say something GOOD about GOODland!