

from our viewpoint...

Who to choose for state treasurer?

Who should we vote for in the “minor” state offices, the ones below governor and attorney general where many voters may not have a clue who’s running, let alone who’s best?

It’s often a decision made on the basis of acquaintance, looks perhaps or a fleeting image – or party label.

Candidates don’t have the budget to blanket the state with advertising like those running for the Senate, governor or even Congress. Many are not that widely known across the state.

But voters have to choose, and there’s no shortage of candidates to run.

Take the race for state treasurer. Longtime incumbent Lynn Jenkins left the post to become the U.S. representative in the second district two years ago after unseating Congressman Jim Ryan in the Republican primary. Jenkins herself had been a mostly unknown factor, the Shawnee County treasurer, when she won the office.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius appointed Dennis McKinney, then a state representative and minority leader of the House, in January 2009 to replace Jenkins, a Republican. Kansas law gives the governor discretion to appoint someone from either party to a state vacancy. (Interestingly enough, for a vacancy for county office or the Legislature, the governor must appoint the choice of the incumbent’s party.)

Thus, while he’s the incumbent treasurer, McKinney has to run his first statewide race against a candidate with more party backing and more money. He’s apparently done a good job of working the treasurer’s position, tirelessly promoting programs to return unclaimed property and establish education spending accounts.

His opponent, Ron Estes, may have even less statewide name recognition, but his membership in the Republican party more than makes up for that. One poll a couple of months ago by Wichita television station KWCH showed him leading 58 percent to 37 percent.

There’s not much on the race since. McKinney continues to work the state, county seat by county seat. That’s one thing that sets him apart out here in the western half of the state is he is one of us. He is from Greensburg, west of Wichita, so we know he’s aware of where and what western Kansas is.

He has been to Oberlin, Colby, Goodland, Norton and St. Francis several times each. He knows the area as well as anyone.

Mr. Estes, we’re not so sure. We haven’t seen him, though he has made a few brief stops in the northwest. That’s not to say he wouldn’t be a good treasurer; just that he has not made much effort in our area. Maybe he doesn’t need to.

Many people, even if they didn’t meet a candidate, will be influenced by which one made the best effort in their area. Out here, for state treasurer, there’s no doubt in our mind who that would be. — Steve Haynes

Letter Policy

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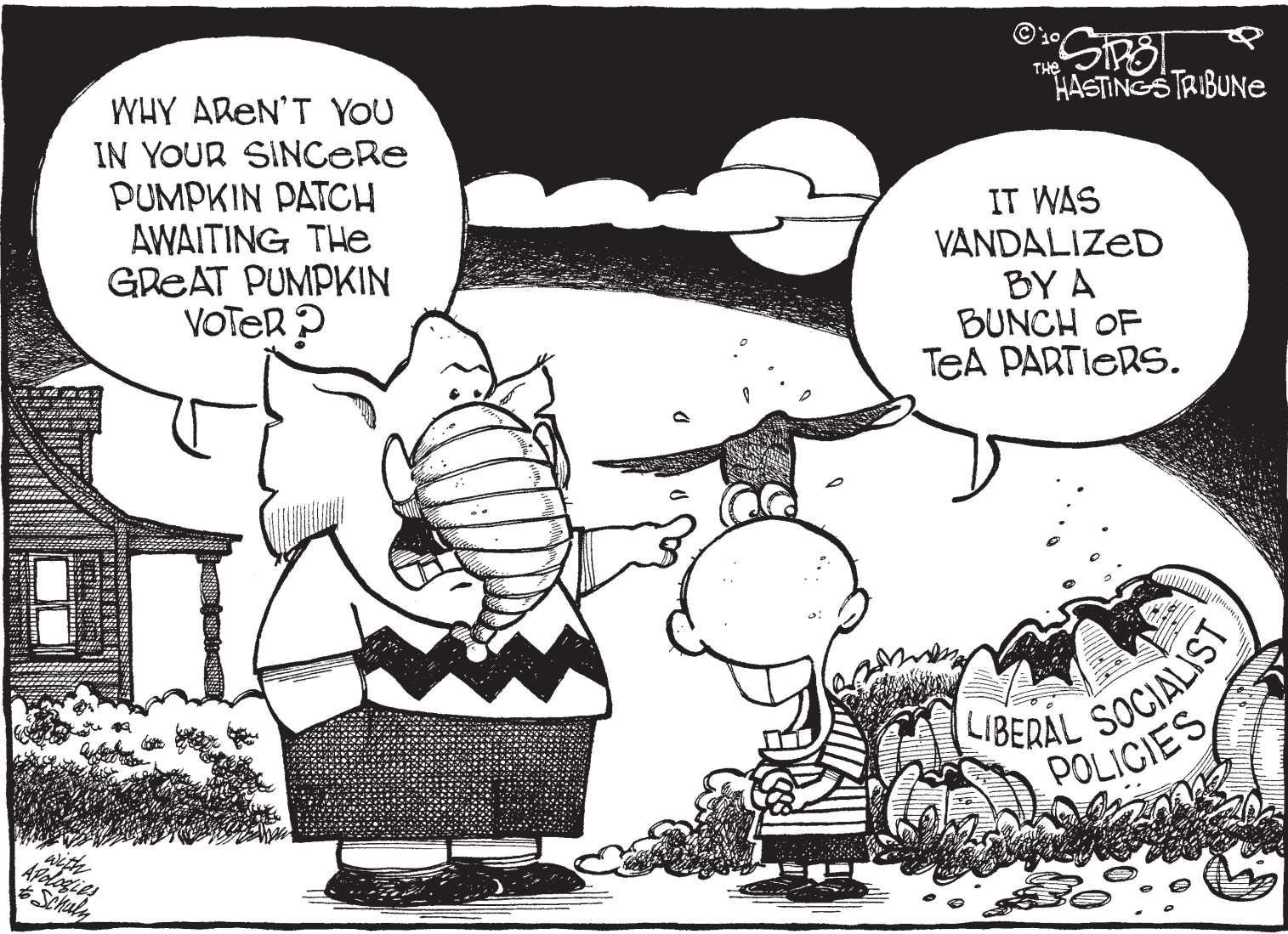
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To grow our prosperity, let my tax cuts expire

Congress should do the responsible thing and let tax cuts for high earners expire at the end of this year.

As someone who has benefited from these tax cuts, I believe we must restore balance to a federal tax system that has been tilted in favor of the wealthiest 5 percent for a generation.

I’ve had a lifelong interest in the vital role of social entrepreneurs, the local heroes who take risks to lead innovative nonprofit organizations to solve problems at the local level.

I’m a big believer in the importance of mentorship, of helping the next generation of business and community leaders find their way.

But I view efficient government and adequate tax revenue as essential ingredients in fostering the fertile soil for business development and healthy communities. Just as a healthy farm or garden needs a balance of nutrients, our country needs a balanced and fair tax system.

Yet the overheated anti-tax rhetoric is alarming. There are loud voices that will object to any tax and claim raising taxes on higher income people will destroy economic growth and punish success. They argue we don’t need additional revenue, we can simply reform entitlements, cut spending and root out waste.

We should obviously press for greater government efficiency and accountability. But it is irresponsible to suggest we can proceed without increasing tax revenue. No gardener or farmer would expect their crops to grow year after year without regular additions of fertilizer.

We have racked up over \$13 trillion in national debt, thanks to borrowing to pay for two wars and a decade of tax cuts. Yet, we have long



from other pens

• commentary

overdue investments in education, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, and public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, broadband access and market protections. Where will the money come from?

Generous tax cuts for the wealthy, passed by Congress in 2001 and 2003, are due to expire at the end of this year. Between 2002 and 2009, households with incomes of over \$250,000 received more than \$700 billion in tax cuts, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. This was essentially added to our national debt.

The higher income people I know didn’t lobby for these original tax breaks and recognize the need to allow them to expire. If we retain these tax cuts, we’ll add another \$700 billion to the debt over the next decade. These are funds better spent in deficit reduction and targeted investments.

The retired business leaders I serve with on community boards are thankful for the opportunities we’ve had to do business and grow wealth in this remarkable nation and free market economic system. None of us exist on an island and no wealth can be created without a society that provides a fertile ground of opportunity for everyone.

In the 30 years after World War II, 1947 to 1977, we taxed ourselves at significantly more progressive tax rates than today. The highest

Damage to fountain a travesty

To the Editor:

I think whomever did the damage to the fountain in Chambers Park, committed a travesty.

The fountain was restored by a family to the memory of a young man who died of cancer.

I hope the one or ones who vandalized the fountain suffer shame whenever they remember their terrible deed.

Pat Allaman
Goodland



from our readers

• to the editor

Tim is a farmer from Fowler and a proven leader who has earned the endorsement of the Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansans for Life and the National Rifle Association, among many others.

Tim understands that we can’t spend our way out of a recession, and that we know how to spend our money better than government does. Tim is against the Obama health care bill, and will fight to keep government from interfering with our personal liberties.

I will confidently vote for Tim Huelskamp for Congress on November 2nd.

Robert Bretz
Goodland

To the Editor:

I’m pleased the school district had a good attendance at the forum on Thursday.

I wasn’t able to attend, but I think since I’ve taught 30 years in Goodland, and at several buildings and had 5 children that went all through Goodland schools I can add a few ideas.

The playground at North School is well planned for safety, in many different games. The one at Central is very inadequate for lively kids, and it’s location on Main Ave. is very dangerous.

Buildings on one level are always safer and North and West are in good locations

Grant School is a beautiful building and must be kept, even if it does need to be made more efficient. When I taught there the wiring was out dated, but it was always a pleasant, historic building, with a good play area.

Elaine Ellison
Goodland

