

from our viewpoint...

Taxing pornography dumbest idea of all

Of all the dumb ideas.
The same people who have been trying to get grand juries to investigate porn shops down along I-70 now want the state to have a 15 or 25 percent tax on pornography.
Excuse us.
Wouldn't the state wind up having a vested interest in pornography, even as it has bought into gambling, liquor and other once-forbidden vices?
And once hooked on the revenue, wouldn't the state then have to protect and promote its porn industry to keep the schools open?
Get real.
There have got to be better ways to raise money for the state of Kansas.
Pornography supporting our schools? Wouldn't we have a hard time telling kids not to buy the stuff if it was good enough to pay their teachers?
You have to wonder what kind of world we live in when people come up with that kind of stuff.

We don't have much porn up here, and it's probably just as well. In the cities, and along I-70, though, it's a flourishing trade.

Why porn shops appeal to interstate travelers is a mystery, but the highways in other states are loaded with them. Kansas has but a few. That's enough to offend some people around Abilene, who have been pushing county attorneys to investigate, call a grand jury or just prosecute the stores.

The Supreme Court has made it pretty difficult to prosecute porno dealers, though, and even grand juries are having a tough time finding any traction.

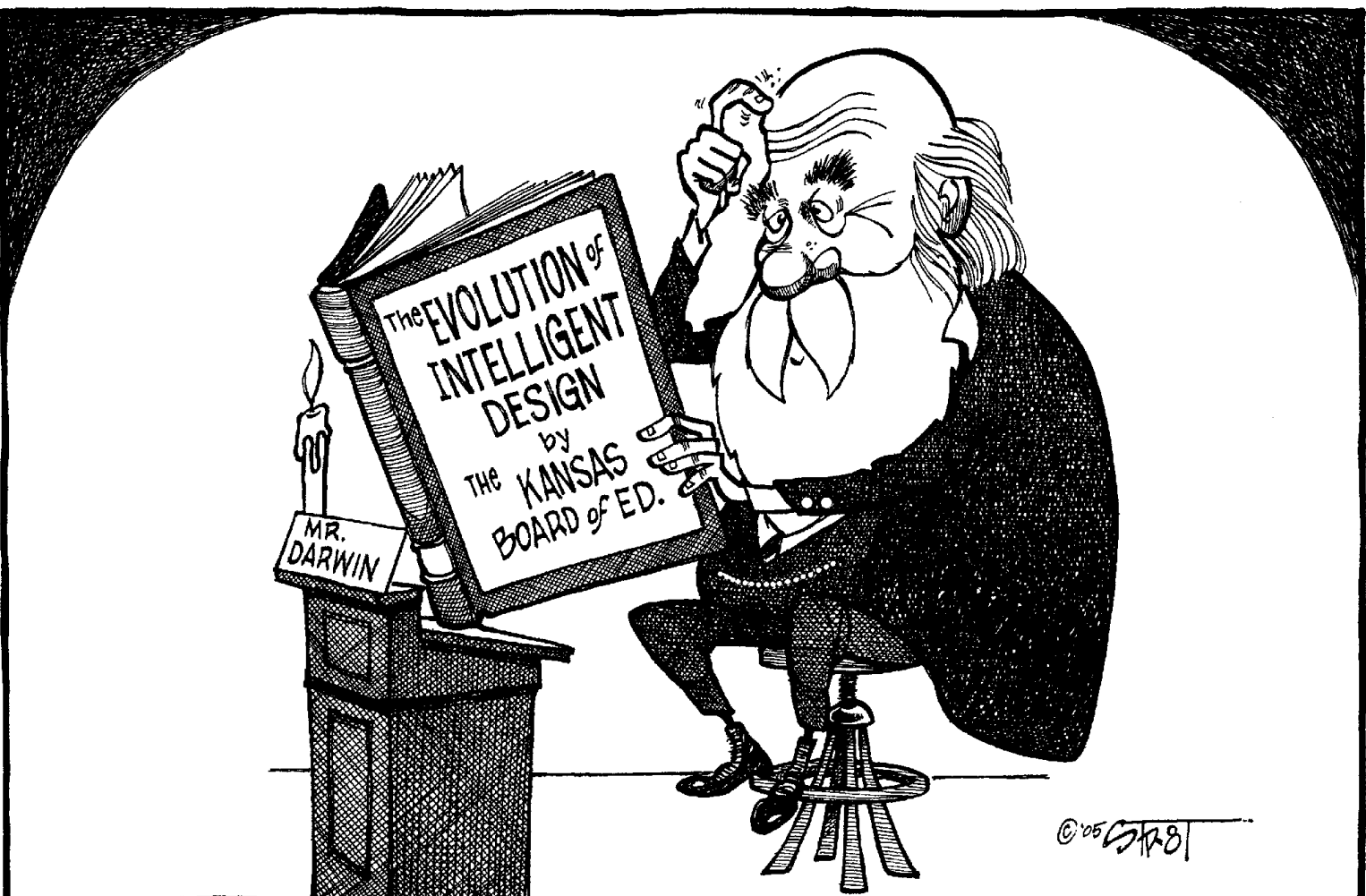
Discouraged, perhaps, by the legal morass, the anti-porn forces came up with the tax scheme. It's similar to the way the anti-saloon movement gave up and proposed a stiff tax on liquor.

You can't have it both ways, though. You're either against pornography, or you think it's a good revenue source. If the state taxes the stuff, it in effect becomes a partner with the makers.

So Kansas winds up in bed with the porno industry?
That's a funny place for the state to be.
Our suggestion is that the state doesn't need money that badly.

Let the porno shops alone. Keep them out on the free-ways and out of towns, away from schools and churches.
If people want to buy that stuff, in a free society, who are we to say no?

But should the state have a vested interest in the porn business?
No.
It's not exactly clean money, is it?
And Kansas has bigger fish to fry. — *Steve Haynes*



Washington is city of monuments, people

I love visiting Washington, the city of monuments and important people.

It was a flying trip. We left Denver on Wednesday morning and were home in our beds Friday night — well, more like Saturday morning, but home, never-the-less.

While Steve was at his National Newspaper Association meeting, the reason we were in the capital, I worked on my computer, editing copy and writing stories. Then I set off for the National Press Club for a press conference and lunch with the new secretary of health and human services, Mike Leavitt.

Mr. Leavitt talked about the problem of some type of bird flu coming out of Southeast Asia. Since then, everywhere I look — magazines, newspapers and television — there's some story about bird flu.

It's a real danger. History shows us that every 10 years or so, the flu gets mean. Now and then it gets lethal enough to close schools and public buildings and fill up both hospitals and morgues.

It's happened before. It can and probably will happen again.

On that sober note, we headed for the Hill to visit with Sen. Pat Roberts' staff and Rep. Jerry Moran.

At Sen. Roberts' office, we were asking that the



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● open season

bids and contracts being awarded in the hurricane relief operations be published in the newspapers in the counties affected.

There's a lot of distrust of the government over this whole relief effort. Letting people know about and be able to bid on contracts and then telling them who, what and where the money is going will help to alleviate some of it. It will cost the government a few thousand dollars to tell people where and how it is spending millions. It will also help those newspapers that, like all other businesses in the area, have been hit hard by the storms and their aftermath.

We had nothing special to talk to Jerry Moran about, but we wanted to say hi.

The congressman told us that he decided not to run for governor for family reasons. His daughters are a sophomore and a senior at Hays High School. In fact, he said, he was leaving early that Friday to fly home since his oldest was running

in the state cross country meet in Wamego.

Working in Washington is hard enough, he said. Campaigning for governor and moving to Topeka, if he won, would have been tough on his teenagers.

Mr. Moran asked us what people were saying out our way and seemed to be informed about most of our problems and concerns.

The next day, Friday, we walked over to the World War II and Korean War monuments. They are breathtaking. We saw lots of older couples walking around taking pictures. I'm sure many of those men were remembering those wars because they were there.

On the way back to the hotel to pick up our suitcases, we cut across the area around the Washington Monument near the White House. Suddenly a helicopter soared over us.

Steve looked up and said, "That's the president."

Sure enough, the helicopter landed on the South Lawn and there were about 200 people standing around waiting for him. On the roofs, we could see riflemen checking the area for danger.

It was a short trip to the nation's capital, but we saw a lot, learned a lot and enjoyed getting home to northwest Kansas, where there's little traffic, less crime and broader vistas to enjoy.

Education commissioner has an agenda

To the Editor:

Bob Corkins, the new Kansas Commissioner of Education, made his appearance in Goodland on Monday, telling his audience of few that he didn't come in to his position at the state Board of Education with a preset agenda. I beg to disagree.

I think Bob Corkins has an agenda. Why would any organization, the state board in this instance, hire someone who didn't "think" similar thoughts as the voters who voted for Corkins?

Emotions were running at a high Monday night as a few members of the audience told their stories. Please don't take this wrong, but I can't help but say to the lovely people of rural Kansas and rural America, ...WAKE UP! Our communities are in trouble, and that means our schools are as well. We could and should be embracing this change, creating the thriving communities we have grown up to know. It's not too late....

Read Tom Peters! Get excited about our children's future. They are the future, and we have the wisdom to mold that future. Do we have the vision? After listening to Bob Corkins last night, I'm still wondering.

Corkins spoke about "research" and "studies," he spoke about evaluations at the state board office. Will these evaluations, which are being conducted inside the organization, reveal the leadership that exists within the walls of the state board?

And he spoke again about studies. I wonder if we are looking at the same research? I was disappointed. I did not hear him once mention there are talented and visionary leaders in the department and his opportunity to work with these people in leading change. It was easy to hear his agenda as he spoke of "choice." Interesting. We are a society focused all about and



from our
readers

● to the editor

all around "choice," but this word was disruptive to most of those present.

I would have liked to hear what Bob Corkins has been reading this past year. Does he understand the flat world and the new economy? Do our communities?

I think there are a lot of innovative thinkers out there. No ... I know for a fact there are! Thinkers who have been in the grass roots of education who are superintendents, principals, tech coordinators, teachers ... and the students who keep stretching our thinking! It is fact. I worked with the best team of educators in the state. That team was called KAL-Tech. We learned to understand where we came from in public education and looked at "re-imagining"

where to write

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