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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Coffey County Republican encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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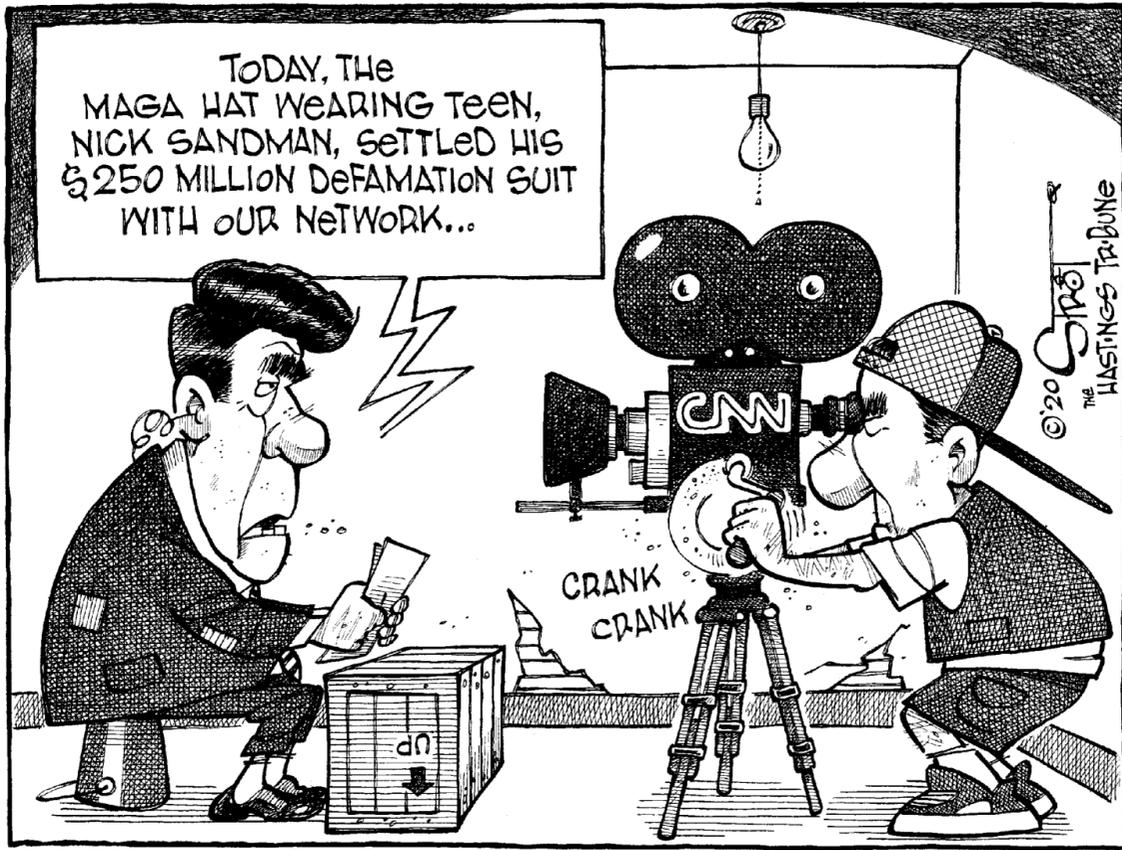
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## Letters to the Editor

### C of C, way to go!

Dear Editor:

The recent commission meeting was highlighted by knowledgeable and enthusiastic Coffey County newcomer, Chamber of Commerce (CC) Director JoAnn Harritos. An escapee from the big city, she knows what city folks appreciate, i.e., escape to the country.

The economic development (ED) view of Coffey County has been, "How much money can we spend to make Coffey County into a city." The government ED program has succeeded in spending millions, but with little success. On the other hand JoAnn presented a view that the county should not try to sell itself as a potential metropolis, but as a wholesome town where city dwellers can get away from the city.

JoAnn's presentation immediately brought the response of, "Why don't we hire you as the ED Director." A better question is, why doesn't the government just get out of the ED business and let the business folks, the CC, take care of it. As (Thomas) Jefferson said, "I predict future happiness for Americans, if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them."

The downer was the total disregard of the commission for the elected county clerk.

A motion was made, with no logical purpose and no prior discussion with County Clerk Angie Kirchner, to change a long established and successful courthouse practice. It was decided that Kirchner would no longer oversee courthouse maintenance and upkeep.

When a solution is implemented for a problem that does not exist, the target is not a better way to do things, but an individual.

The goal of the commissioner who made the motion was to "be like other counties." When I contacted the counties that border us, I found only two used direct commission oversight of maintenance. Two have oversight by the county clerk, and in the rest people went directly to the maintenance people, i.e., self-supervision.

Again, what is the motive for what the commissioners did? The final outcome, despite little study, despite already spending thousands on a wage study, and despite no problem existing, was a 4-1 vote to solve the non-existing problem. They have the power, but I have been told by commissioners that they do not want to micromanage departments, let alone the janitors in the courthouse.

What is the change? Funny, the change was not really decided upon, just that four of the five commissioners wanted to solve a problem that did not exist, even though they saw no problem with how the county clerk was keeping the courthouse clean. They also have not settled who would supervise.

Ronald Regan noted, "Government does not solve problems, it subsidizes them." The conclusion of the Coffey County Commission seems to be that it is better to spend more taxpayer money, maybe, just so Angie does not supervise the courthouse maintenance folks.

By the way, to be fair, a commissioner noted that it used to be done the new way. That it did not work may be why it was changed. As Commissioner Saueressig noted, the idea of having a commissioner in charge, who may or may not be around, just does not sound like a good idea.

I encourage all citizens to go to the county website under videos and view this meeting. If you do not want to see it all, start at about 1 hr. 50 min. It will be worth your effort to see how government runs and why the new video setup is GREAT.

We the people,  
**Don Small**  
**Burlington**

## Lord, place your arms around our young warriors

There is something haunting, yet button-busting proud, to see hundreds — and apparently soon to be thousands — of American military troops as they load onto an assortment of mammoth aircraft bound for the Mideast.

It matters not why the president and Pentagon leaders chose to take out an Iranian general, or why the drone attack took place at an Iraqi airport, or whether the Congress was properly notified, or if a counter attack can be expected in the coming days.

The fact is: Young Americans are leaving our shores, making no protest in doing so, all superbly trained to fight those

dedicated to dastardly terrorism.

The troops do not step before microphones before deploying. They simply pack their gear, each one carrying a rifle designed specifically for their duty. Their packs weigh between 60 and 100 pounds including body armor, weapons, batteries, ammunition and emergency food rations.

There is no youthful arrogance or boasting among the men and women toting those bags and heading into unknown skies. Only top brass know their destinations, but all know their orders and are sworn to obey them.

Political and cultural situations in Iraq, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and other Mideastern countries are mired in centuries-long conflict, so another war is almost commonplace to them. Not so with the American troops who

are trained to do specific jobs, complete their missions then come back home.

It is they for whom we pray today — along with their leaders who have battles of their own to fight in Washington.

President Herbert Hoover made the wise statement during the groundswell that finally led into World War II. "Older leaders declare war. But it is the youth who must fight and die."

Give our leaders wisdom, oh Lord. Our young people have fought too many battles in their short lives already.

But thank you for the determined albeit fearful looks in each of their eyes as they load onto those planes this week.

They are our heroes. And, they shall be victorious.

—Rudy Taylor is the publisher of three weekly newspapers in southeast Kansas.

## Why abolish the Electoral College?

A lot of people, most of them Democrats, want to abolish the Electoral College.

This is not a good idea. The college was created by the Founders as a compromise method of selecting a president, a buffer to protect the smaller states from the power of big states.

Without it, and the similar system to apportion the Congress, the Constitution might never have been ratified. Both still works that way, softening the bloc voting of a few big states and spreading power gently across the land.

The college is made up of 538 electors chosen by the states and the District of Columbia. The allocation is one for each member of Congress per state, which amounts to six for Kansas, which has four House members and two senators.

Because each state has two senators, no matter how small or how large the population, the system gives some advantage to small states. The smallest states derive the biggest leverage — three

votes each for Wyoming, Montana, the Dakotas, Alaska, Delaware and Vermont.

California, the largest state, has 55 electors, for 53 Representatives and two senators. The District of Columbia is allocated three.

Without the leverage offered by the college, large states would have a disproportionate advantage. The framers feared candidates would be drawn only to the big states, and those from small states feared they would be dominated by their large neighbors.

That still could happen. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in 2016 by 2.87 million votes, but Donald Trump garnered 304 electoral votes to 227 for Clinton, including some big states such as Texas and Florida that often swing Republican. Clinton piled up her popular-vote margins in New York and California, among other states.

So, the Electoral College did what the framers had planned. Faced with the threat of tyranny of the big states, they relied on the same mechanism used to balance the Congress.

What now?

Angered by Clinton's loss despite winning the popular vote, many Democrats have been crying to change the system. They should be careful, because the Electoral College has benefited their party at times. It is not a partisan creature.

Faced with the reality that Congress is unlikely to pass an amendment to change the system any time soon, these activists hatched a plan to subvert the Electoral College system. Called the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, it would require signatory states to cast all their electoral votes for the popular-vote winner, regardless of how their people voted. Thus a state where the people voted for the Democratic candidate might be forced to vote for the Republican Electoral-College winner.

The constitutionality of the compact, of course, has yet to be challenged, but at last count, 15 states representing 196 Electoral votes were members. While it sounds simple and sweet, we doubt it would pass a court test.

Which leaves us where we stand, as residents of a small state: protected by a system cleverly and lastingly devised by a group of very astute men.

## They're back ...

OK, they're back in Topeka now, choosing between which lobbyist's dinner offer seems best, rather than reaching around you

at the meat case of the local grocery store looking for a good deal on hamburger. Yes, it's 2020 and the Kansas Legislature is back in business.

Much of these first few days will be settling in, finding out what new restaurants have opened in Topeka, and waiting not quite breathlessly for Gov. Laura Kelly's Wednesday evening State of the State Address, and on Thursday getting the real meat of the session — her budget.

Expect that Medicaid expansion deal she's made with Senate Majority Leader Jim Denning, R-Overland Park, to be the lead, and most legislators — especially Republicans — are going to be listening to just how Kelly describes the bill, and whether she manages to convince lawmakers that she made some concessions to the Republican No. 2 man in the Senate. That's important for Kelly picking up GOP votes for the deal and for moderate Republicans (not Senate President Susan Wagle, R-Wichita, who opposes the whole issue) to assert that they didn't just take dictation from the Democrat governor, but actually hammered (pillow-fought?) the deal.

And then there's that re-amortization of the most politically important piece of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs). Kelly, as have previous governors, is suggesting that the \$6.8 billion in unfunded liability of the teacher/state employee portion of the pension fund be re-amortized. That's simply issuing bonds that will bring the fund to what they call "unfunded liability" which is what it's going to cost to provide those pensions. That unfunded liability is essentially a promise of pensions that the state doesn't have the money on hand to pay.

Republicans generally don't like the re-amortization, which though it will cut year-to-year budget transfers to KPERs, includes lots of interest on that new re-amortization. Republicans, especially, don't mind getting interest, but don't like paying it. Look for that to create a loud, long fight this year.

And that re-amortization also frees up money in the governor's proposed budget that means more money to spend ... which she likes.

Medicaid and re-amortization are the big-dollar issues, but both are hard to make into exciting bullet points on a campaign brochure.

So ... we get to the sexy stuff that people buy bumper stickers to champion.

There's abortion, of course, which the Kansas Supreme Court says is a constitutional right in Kansas no matter what the federal government does, and abortion opponents want a Kansas constitutional amendment — if they can't just remake the Kansas Supreme Court — to end abortion in Kansas.

And there's guns, of course, always a political G-spot in election years. This year gun activists have targeted the state's "red flag" provisions, which so far haven't been used publicly to have police seize the firearms of those who have threatened spouses, companions, or who have evidenced mental instability that may threaten others.

Nothing like a gun fight to divide the Legislature and the voters who send those legislators to Topeka for the winter.

Medicaid, budget, KPERs, guns, abortion. Those are just the leading issues, but there are dozens of smaller items on the menu, like sales tax on groceries and how to get it back to the state's poor? And of course, the state is still muddling through that December 2017 federal tax law, which boosted the Kansas income tax of some Kansas-based international corporations and tied Kansas individual income taxes to federal standard deductions, costing the upper-middle class millions in lost Kansas tax deductions.

Oh, and of course, there's figuring out how to vote on those issues, and explain it to voters this fall.

—Syndicated by Hawver News Company LLC of Topeka; Martin Hawver is publisher of Hawver's Capitol Report — to learn more about this nonpartisan statewide political news service, visit the website at www.hawvernews.com.



**Martin Hawver**  
Columnist