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Republican

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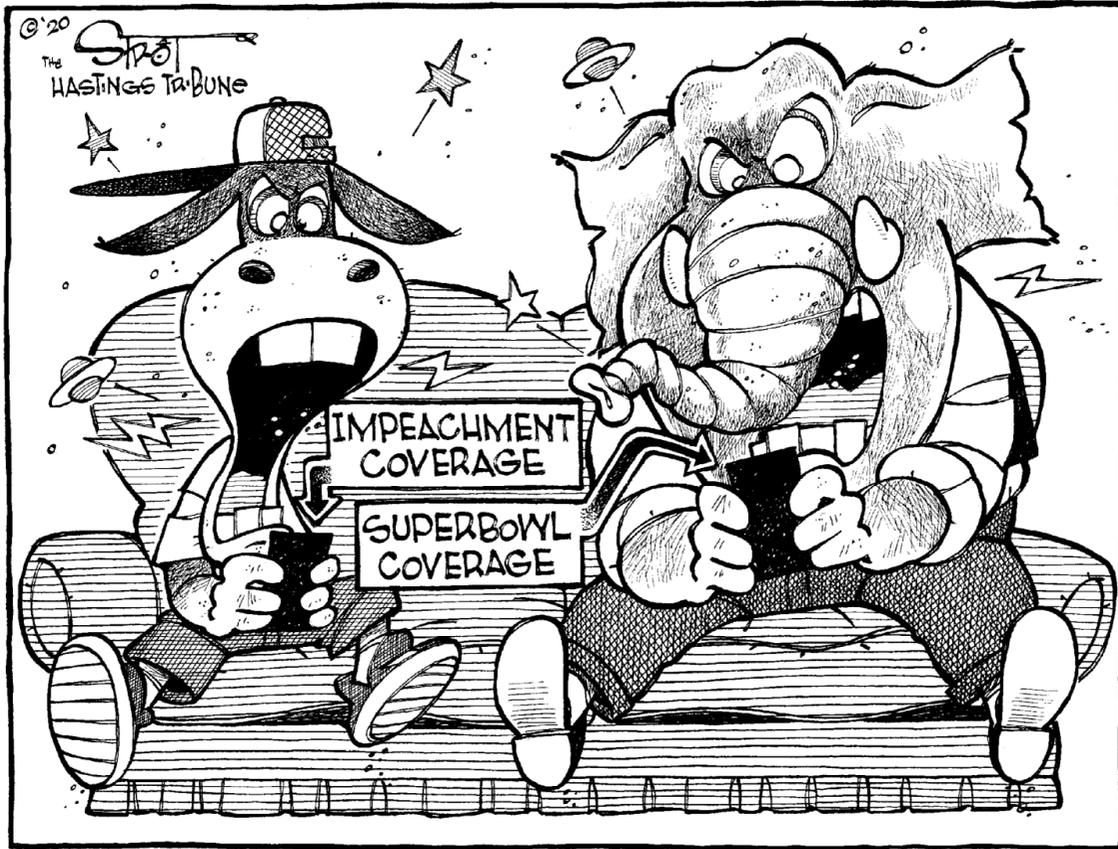
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Swallowing bitterness

This outbreak of a new coronavirus in China will result in widespread "swallowing bitterness." Several thousands of years of Chinese history have seen citizens suffer plagues, wars, food shortages and starvation, warlord pillaging, and natural disasters. These tragedies that afflicted everyone had to be withstood. And you just moved onward. And swallowed the bitterness.

Education Frontlines



John Schrock
Educator

Even in times when everyone was equal, as in "equally poor," the Chinese have persevered by holding onto dreams and looking forward to the simplest of joys. That includes coming together as family once a year at Spring Festival, officially starting Jan. 25. Now the yearlong plans of Chinese in Wuhan and Hubei Province have changed. It has become necessary to lockdown transport and stay-in-place. Affluent business families, students studying far from home since their high scores allowed them entry into the best universities, and poor rural parents who came to work in factories and have only this major holiday to return and visit with their child or children being cared for by grandparent - they will all swallow bitterness.

China is not the United States. Most of its population is now literally stacked in the big cities. Put nearly five people where you see one in the U.S. And living

space is less; China has more mountain ranges and deserts. In the largest cities, if everyone was down at street level at the same time, movement would be nearly impossible. Packed together, disease transmission is even more likely.

Chinese medical scientists have worked rapidly and professionally. In a CNN report, Baylor College vaccine specialist Dr. Peter Hotez praised the speed with which Chinese researchers sequenced and published the virus's genome, asserting "With SARS, it took almost a year to be able to identify and map the full genetic code. Now we're doing this in just a few weeks." Hotez found it is likewise remarkable that scientists are able to start developing a vaccine for a virus identified less than a month ago.

According to Anthony Fauci, head of our U.S. National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, "The NIH is in the process of taking the first steps towards the development of a vaccine." But he indicated to CNN that it would take several months for the first phase of the clinical trials to start, and over a year before a vaccine might be available. That does not help the situation now.

Doctors in China are working as rapidly as possible to determine the ultimate danger of this new virus. It finally has a name, "2019-nCoV," although the press will probably still call it the Wuhan virus. During the first weeks of the epidemic, all patients seemed to have picked it up from the local market. If those were the only patients, it would indicate that

it was only transmitted from animal-to-human. But additional cases arose that were never in the markets, indicating it was now transmitted human-to-human.

Another critical unknown was how virulent this new virus was. With more patients dying, this strain of coronavirus is now recognized as a serious threat.

In the U.S., both state health departments and the CDC describe: Symptoms can include a fever and respiratory symptoms such as cough or difficulty breathing, similar to what you may feel with influenza or a bad cold. Symptoms usually start within 14 days of an exposure.... It cannot be transmitted from inanimate objects (such as items or packages purchased from China).... This is an ongoing investigation and information is changing rapidly. For updated information on the outbreak, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

China's older generations have seen emergencies before. Today's parents have known hunger, their grandparents knew starvation. But the younger generation that has now grown up in China's burgeoning middle and upper class, called second generation rich or "fu er dai" have not remembered the need for quarantine and travel restriction. Yet in China, their great respect for family elders and their closer history to "hard times" will make this shutdown, with the heartbreak of curtailed plans held by the whole population for a year, something that they know they must do. They will swallow bitterness.

Finding your voice

A civics teacher once simplified the idea of politics for me to the action of deciding whom gets what and how much. This fundamental idea of dividing resources should be a concern to everyone but politics has become a subject many people avoid. The average citizen could probably provide a dozen reasons why they are not interested or involved in the political process.

Insight



Jackie Mundt
Pratt County
Farmer and
Rancher

However, legislators need to hear our voices to make the right choices. I occasionally have the opportunity to bring new people to the statehouse for legislative visits. It always makes me happy to see the look of surprise and a bit of panic on their faces when a legislator asks their opinion about an important issue. The surprise usually turns to respect when they realize that the lawmaker genuinely values their input.

Politicians have an obligation to represent their constituents, and it is difficult to do well if citizens do not share their thoughts and opinions. The saying, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" reflects

a fundamental truth of the ability of every member of our society to engage in the political process. Your contribution can be as simple and powerful as making elected officials aware of important issues so they can take action.

So why don't people speak up more? The power politicians possess can be intimidating, and people often feel insignificant on their own. Remembering politicians are citizens just like you and finding strength in a group or organization can help to make engaging in the political process more comfortable.

Growing up, my friend's mom was a state representative who balanced her career with all kinds of mom duties like being a 4-H leader and attending local basketball games. At the time, I had no comprehension of the prestige or power of her job. My first-hand experience, that elected officials are real people with families, personal lives and everyday concerns, is a source connection and confidence during my interactions with legislators.

The other source of my political confidence has grown out of involvement in Kansas Farm Bureau. When I moved here a decade ago, I was starting from scratch without a network of contacts or political connections. Joining Farm Bu-

reau gave me expert resources to explain the process, gain background knowledge and sharpen my communication skills. Farm Bureau also provided contacts to build my network and the ability to stand together with others who cared about the same issues. Joining an organization that shares your values and concerns is a great way to start engaging in advocacy.

The Kansas Legislature is in session now, and it is a great time to visit with your representatives. If you can't make the trip to Topeka, plan to attend a town hall in your area or send a note about an issue that matters to you. You might be surprised by how quickly a legislator learns your name if you get involved or reach out to share your opinions.

Politicians control the resources of our state and nation. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that your opinion doesn't matter. Legislatures are real people who want to represent you well. Help them by letting them know what issues matter to you and your community.

Your voice matters, use it.
—"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.

2020 session off to fast start

(Jan. 21) — Welcome to the 2020 Session. This has been the fastest start to legislative work during my term in the Kansas Senate. In the past, it was weeks before we really got things going. Committees are kicking out bills and the list is getting long.



Bruce Givens
State Senator
14th District

Senate rules are different than House rules - as they should be. The Majority Leader in the Senate decides what will get heard or acted on by the entire body. The Senate

President decides which committee gets which bill and sometimes influences the speed that a bill is heard (or not heard). Usually the Majority Leader and the Senate President work closely on every bill.

The bill that we will be discussing on Medicaid Expansion is a bill that was negotiated with the Governor and the Majority Leader, a Republican. Many lobbying groups such as Americans for Prosperity (AFP) are very opposed to this expansion. I certainly understand it - the bill increases government. However, 36 states have already expanded. Kansans are paying for the expansion (Medicaid tax) but not receiving federal money for

expansion. I believe this expansion will significantly help the medical providers in this district (five hospitals and several clinics). I assume we will get a good bill on the floor soon.

I have never used my allocation of state funds to send out newsletters or related mailings. I just don't think it is proper to use state funds to send out my opinions. I will not respond to "canned" or bulk emails. This week I received a handwritten note from a teacher in Neodesha who asked me to work on protecting our students. It was hand-delivered by a group

See Givens, Page 5

GOP platform test

Kansas Republicans, no, not just you folks who are Republicans because your parents are/were, but folks actually active in the party, will gather this weekend in Olathe to ... well, say how happy they are to be Republicans.

Oh, they'll have debates at the Annual Kansas Republican Convention among their party's candidates for the GOP nomination for U.S. Senate and

Martin Hawver
Columnist

in at least one congressional district. And they will pay tribute to retiring U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., for his 40 years of service in and around Congress - if the Senate is done deciding whether to fire President Donald Trump by Saturday so Roberts can attend the banquet that bears his name.

But the real temperature of the convention can probably be taken by just how anti-abortion and abortion-rights Republicans interact.

That abortion deal? It would let Kansas voters, either a bunch at the general election in November, or a smaller number at the August primary election, hand the authority to the Legislature to regulate abortion in Kansas, essentially overturning the Kansas Supreme Court decision last year which held that the choice of an abortion is a constitutional individual right that the Legislature can't by law restrict.

And it might tell us something about whether many have read the party's official platform, and what it says Kansas Republicans believe in and what they don't.

You don't have to initial the platform and its provisions to get a drink at a reception or several drinks at several receptions, but you'll probably have more people to chat with if you're behind that platform.

Among the platform's "official Kansas Republican" provisions are that the party officially believes "life begins at conception," "culture should respect and protect life," that the "judiciary must respect the separation of powers and not make laws" and that it wants the 1973 Roe v. Wade U.S. Supreme Court decision overturned.

Hmmm ... those platform provisions are going to get a test among Republicans in the Statehouse, likely this week, just days before the state GOP convention, when either the House or the Senate (leaders are still bargaining over which chamber will vote first) will vote on a resolution that if at least 27 Senate and 84 House members vote yes, will wind up on the August primary election ballot for voters to decide by a simple majority vote.

State GOP party leaders say they just want the party to pull together behind the party platform, maybe not every piece of it, but generally much of it.

So, what's the Olathe partying have to do with life under the Dome?

It might well be where the party members, on the abortion issue, chose their favorites for primary election votes. It might be where anti-abortion potential candidates pick up support on that one issue that will help them finance campaigns to unseat incumbents who are for abortion rights. Or, it might tell them that the most politically active Republicans in their districts are for abortion rights, and they need to find another more complicated issue on which to wage their intra-party scraps. You never go wrong just proposing to reduce property taxes, do you?

And when the Republicans hit the road for home Saturday night or Sunday morning after the convention (in time to watch the Kansas City Chiefs at the Super Bowl), party members on both sides of the abortion issue are going to be calculating just what intra-party scraps mean in the post-election 2021 Legislature. There are now 29 Republicans and 11 Democrats in the Senate, 84 Republicans and 41 Democrats in the House.

The governor? She's for abortion rights but doesn't have any role in the process of putting the issue on the likely-August ballot.

Yes, this might be a fairly interesting GOP convention in Olathe. We'll see who makes friends and who doesn't.

—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