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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.

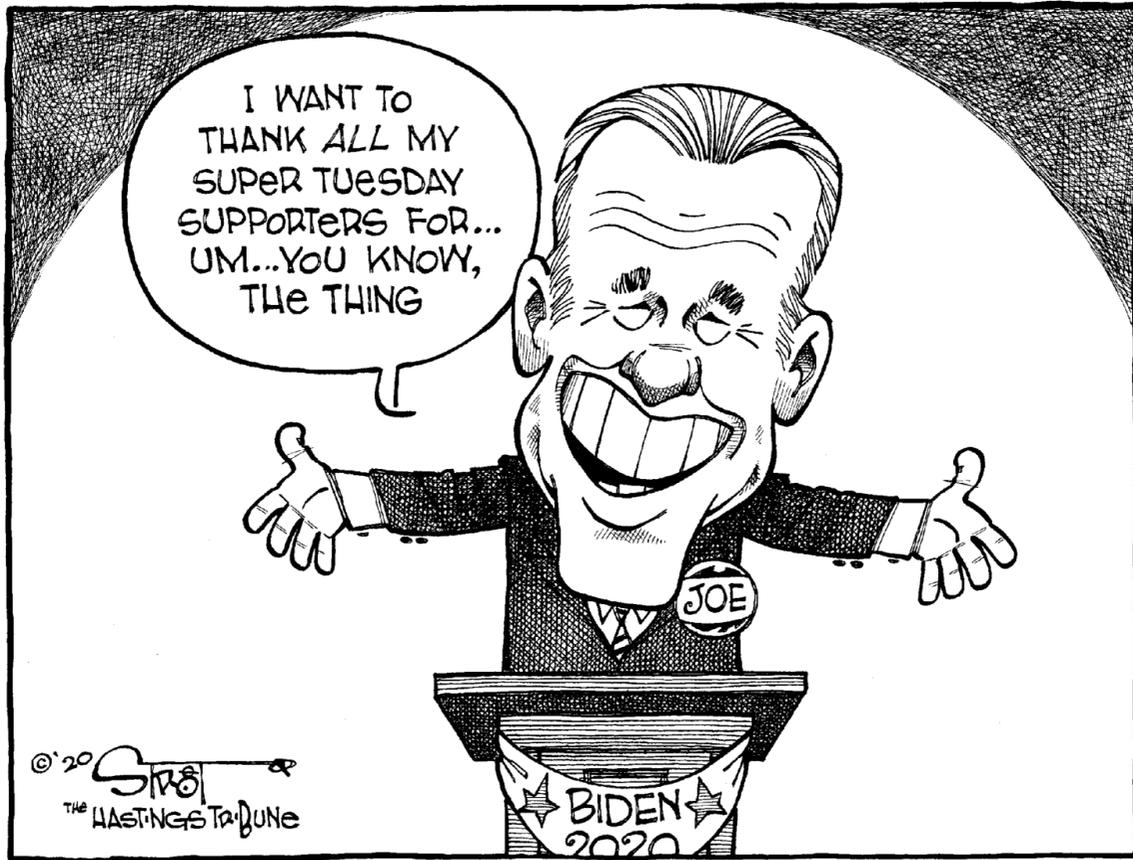
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Letters to the Editor

Whose child is this?

Dear Editor:

Were Dr. Schrock's article on freedom from religion in government schools and Mr. Hawver's article on abortion printed in *The Republican* (2/6/2020) coincidental? Hawver notes that by a 6-1 margin in 2019 the Kansas Supreme Court found in the 1861 Kansas Constitution that a woman has complete control over the right to life of her child, going even further than *Roe v. Wade*. Dr. Schrock discusses the separation of "church and government."

A mother can kill a child, using appropriated government funds in many cases, but if she gives birth she has no control over a child's education, unless she happens to be wealthy enough to both pay taxes and pay for a private school. We see many who "love" children, especially minority children, and the poor, especially the minority poor, yet support killing the children and depriving the living child of a better education. Black Americans represent 12 percent of the population, yet 30 percent of abortions are black children and 25 percent of the poor are black. The U.S. spends 39 percent more on education than any other OECD nation (18 European nations, Canada and the U.S.), but law prevents parents from spending government appropriated funds on private schools, thus maintaining a monopoly.

Dr. Schrock's "solidly established" separation of religion and education is not solid. Nine of 13 colonies had state churches and virtually all schools in the 13 colonies, until the 1800s, were run by churches. Even the Boston Latin School, claiming to be the first U.S. public school (1623), was run by a Puritan and prepared young men for the ministry. "Children were a gift of God" to the parent, who determined education goals.

Bigotry against Roman Catholic immigration brought on the Blaine Amendments that prohibited "public" money from going to religious schools. Today, the Blaine Amendment fence is being threatened by Espinoza vs. Montana, currently in the U.S. Supreme Court, and to be decided next June. Montana has a program, like Kansas, where individu-

als and private businesses can receive a "modest" tax credit for money given to a private non-profit scholarship fund that benefits poor children. The Montana Department of Revenue, Rule 1, says that since Montana had a Blaine Amendment, such money could not be used for private "religious" schools. Kendra Espinoza and other low-income mothers brought suit, contending that the law allows funding for general education, but prohibits it for religious schools, thus violating the Constitutional protection of Religious Freedom and Due Process.

Perhaps we will see the day when a child will be safe in the womb of its mother "then" safe in the school of the mother's choice. Will money go to other than Christian schools? I have faith in a sovereign God who can handle the issue.

**We the people,
Don Small
Burlington**

Be wary of 'right to repair'

Dear Editor:

The Kansas legislature is officially in session and will tackle a myriad of issues during its short 90-day window. Democratic Governor Laura Kelly is hitting the ground running in her second year working with the Republican-controlled legislature, to try and achieve a lofty agenda that includes things ranging from Medicaid expansion to taxing streaming services like Amazon Prime and Netflix.

Another potential bill that we could see come up again during this year's session is about a "right to repair" issue. It might sound fine on the surface, but there are many reasons to be wary of a potential bill like this.

In fact, last year 23 states considered "right to repair" bills, but ultimately not a single state passed the bill or signed it into law, including Kansas. Each of the states rejected it for a simple reason - this is not actually a "right to repair" issue. This is an issue of unsafe and illegal tampering, that if passed could be detrimental to the operator of the equipment. And as more farmers learn about this issue and

the ability of their equipment to be compromised, hacked and infected with malware, their support for "right to repair" has fallen.

One argument that "right to repair" supporters refuse to discuss, is how equipment operators found themselves with such limited choices. Modern farming equipment is forced to follow the federal laws that were started under the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. As those demands grew into high-tech embedded code ever increasing stringent requirements were placed on manufacturers resulting in more proprietary control of those codes.

Currently, it is illegal to install a component that would bypass or make emission controls inoperative on agricultural equipment, under EPA regulations. It is not illegal to purchase older equipment manufactured prior to the implemented regulations or build your own equipment from remanufactured parts. Those who support the "right to repair" claim there are no other options and consumers are at the mercy of monopolies.

Overly vague "right to repair" legislation does not address the safety hazards caused by the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. The most notable is the fire hazard created by igniting airborne dust and debris in daily operations of the Regeneration Equipment required in the emissions systems. It does not address the extensive cost to the consumer for the constant repairs needed to keep the emissions systems operational or the loss of products felt by every consumer from having equipment down during the most vital times of the season. The "right to repair" legislation does not address the cost of the mandated systems added on to the price at the time of purchase.

Lawmakers should do their due diligence to protect farmers from unnecessary interference by the Federal Government. "Right to repair" legislation would not be a consideration if consumers were not limited in the types of equipment they are allowed to purchase.

Governor Kelly has her work cut out for her again this year, but if she continues to work across the aisle with the majority of the state legislature, she will be able to sign beneficial legislation.

**Angel Cushung
Allen**

No springing forward; no falling back

A clock in China is never turned backward or moved forward an hour. China also lacks time zones despite being roughly the same size as the continental United States.

Education Frontlines



John Schrock
Educator

My father never liked changing the clock twice a year for daylight saving time. So I could not help but wonder if he would have preferred China's uniform time keeping when I visited the far eastern and far western regions of that country. Harbin is in the far northeast of China, above North Korea and roughly equal to being in the U.S. state of Maine. I have been there twice, once to lecture on publication integrity at Harbin Engineering University and once to visit the Unit 731 museum of Japanese biowarfare. Both times, I had to leave very early the next day to go to the Harbin airport to fly to Beijing and then fly home. I expected it to still be dark as I was driven to the airport, but the sun was already up. Or to be more correct, this easternmost part of China was rotating into the sunlight at 4:00am in the

morning.

On another trip, I lectured on entomology publishing at ShiHeZe University in far western China. This was beyond Urumji, the capitol of Xinjiang that is China's huge western province. That would be somewhat similar to Los Angeles in distance. I landed at 2:00 pm in the afternoon and my hosts took me to a restaurant for lunch.

As we each feasted on a leg of lamb and rice, I commented on how many customers were still eating at the restaurant. In central China, you usually attend work or school from 8:00am to noon, and then return from 2:00pm until 6:00pm.

"Oh, this is normal," my hosts explained. "Here we go to work at 10 a.m. and work until 2 p.m. Then we go to lunch or home for two hours, and go back to work from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m."

And indeed, it did not get dark until well after 10 p.m. And the next morning the sun did not arise until nearly 9 a.m.

Unlike in the U.S. where we have Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific Standard time zones, all of China is on just one time zone. The majority of Chinese go to work on a similar schedule. The populations in far western China merely adjust their work schedule. China's one

single standard time that is countrywide. And there is no adjustment to daylight saving time twice a year.

So train and bus schedules in China are uniform. There is no need to adjust for different time zones. Some years ago, I took a bus from my university town in Kansas to attend and speak at an Academy of Sciences meeting being held at a university in Indiana in the fall. My bus trip on the way back took us through Springfield, Illinois in the middle of the night. There we stopped and just waited for an hour. It was the time to "fall back." I asked the bus driver what he did on this route in the spring when the clock is moved forward one hour. His reply was "I drive like heck" (or a word close to that).

There is one education advantage to countrywide uniform time. The second week of June in China is the time for the all-important gao kao test that all high school seniors take that determines if they enter college. In the U.S., sometimes a student takes a national test on the East Coast and gets out in time to phone answers to a student on the West Coast before their test begins. This cannot happen in China. The gao kao test begins at

What will they do?

We're about to see just what the Legislature is going to do for, or to, us in the next couple weeks. Yes ... lawmakers have been in session eight weeks, but it's this week that we may see something significant in the way of legislation.

Nope, no budget yet, but it appears that this could be the week that committees in both chambers get very close to massaging Gov. Laura Kelly's budget for the remainder of this fiscal year and next fiscal year.

So far, on the basics of keeping the government running, legislators are agreeing on much of what she has proposed for the operation of the state. Nope, not major issues, but the groundwork that the governor proposed appears to be pretty-well received.

The highway plan? Surprisingly, once Kelly agreed to complete all the projects that former Gov. Sam Brownback couldn't because he kept siphoning money out of the Kansas Department of Transportation, it looks likely to pass out of committees to the House and maybe Senate floors for debate. Key there is that everyone wants every foot of road promised to them back in 2010, even if it is four or five years late.

Nothing like highways to get legislators re-elected, is there? So, look for a little squabbling, but for the governor's highway plan to move forward.

School finance? Practically, it looks like not a bunch of new money for the public K-12 schools, but enough to keep the Legislature on the right side of the Kansas Supreme Court decision last year which held the state's financing of public schools was unconstitutional.

Taxes ... oh yes, taxes ... Actually, the big issue to most of us is not getting a lot clearer yet.

The Senate has tossed to the House a couple bills dealing with the qualifications of appraisers, and one major property tax bill that doesn't cost the state any money but let lawmakers brag about "transparency" with local units of government forced to hold public hearings if they propose to spend more property tax revenue than they did last year.

Now, transparency is probably a good thing, but for most of us it doesn't really matter until we open the tax bill envelope and see if we're paying more or less than last year. Nothing so far from the Legislature that would cut property taxes for anyone.

Income tax is the big deal for the election-year legislature and that side of the issue remains uncertain in the House. The state has more money than expected, and, well, there are few better places for legislators to vote to put that than in the pockets of voters.

At this point, the scraps are over income taxes; do lawmakers drop tax liabilities of corporations that help finance their campaigns, or individual voters, and which ones of them? For voters, the issue gets simple: Cut my taxes.

It's the political decision that is complicated in the Statehouse.

Help the poor, maybe by cutting rates, or making some portion of the sales tax they pay for groceries a refundable credit against their income taxes? Help the middle-class by boosting the standard deduction, allowing them to pay taxes on smaller amounts of income? De-couple from the federal standard deductions which allows the better-off to not waste their state deductions?

And, don't forget, within all those classes are Social Security recipients, and there are bills that would boost the level of untaxed Social Security payments based on total income.

In the next week, maybe two, we'll know which way legislators are going, and maybe which ones to re-elect and which ones to keep at home after the elections.

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