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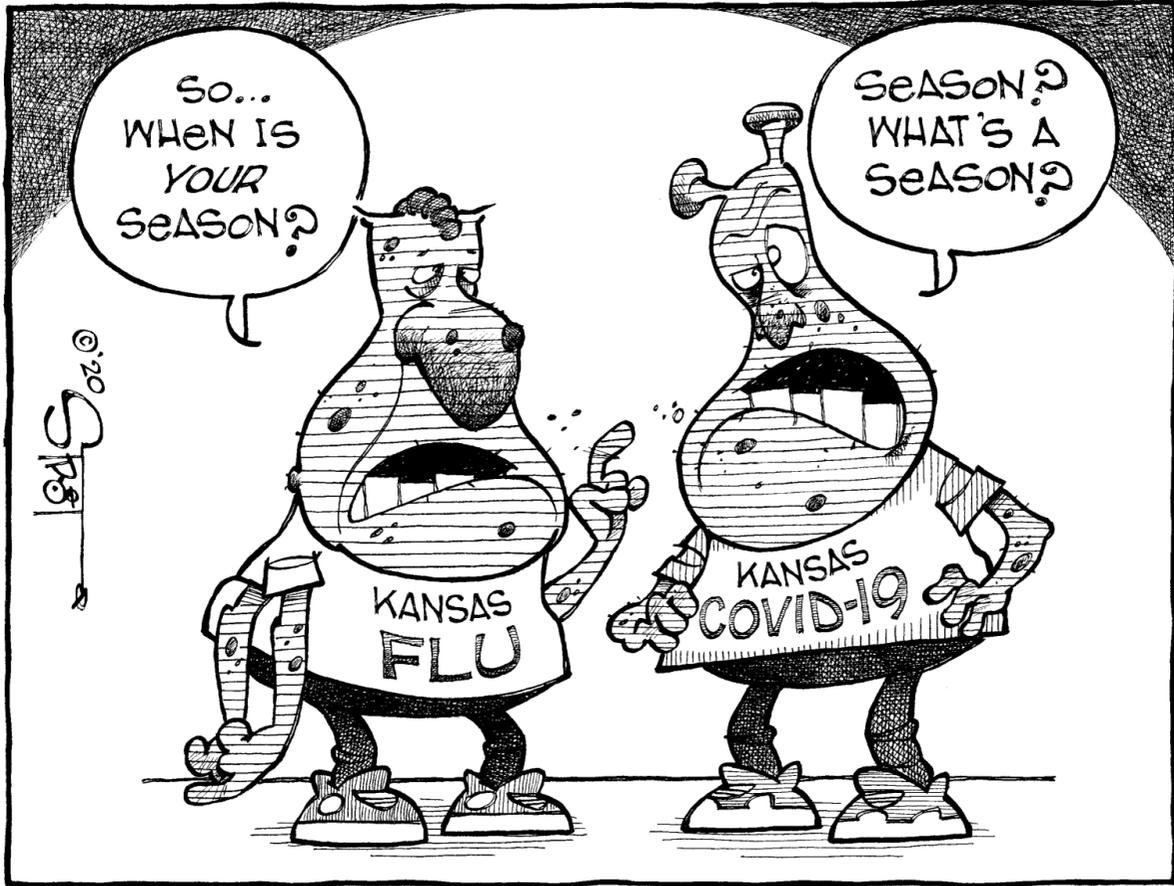
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Outside views of American democracy

One of the best ways for the United States to promote its form of democracy is to recruit students from other countries to study here. This is referred to as “soft power.” There is some evidence that over the last century, some foreign students returned to their country with a new motivation to move their system toward a more democratic system based in their history but inspired by their experiences here.

Education Frontlines



John Schrock
Educator

Times are changing. Many European students who now come from countries where everyone gets health care are puzzled by our unwillingness to provide equitable health care for all Americans. They also witness our growing rates of poverty, with one-third of our school children now being food insecure. Our recent foreign policy toward their countries has become one of economic threats.

More international college students arrive here to find much lower standards of living than they had assumed from the imported films and media about America that they had watched. Many are alarmed by the lack of U.S. economic development, especially in small towns and rural areas. More now finish their degrees and return to their home country where they often find opportunities are now greater than staying in the United States.

This year, Professor Yingyi Ma of Syracuse University released her in-depth

interviews of Asian students who have come to the United States. In her book, “Ambitious and Anxious: How Chinese College Students Succeed and Struggle in American Higher Education,” she records one college student who came here thinking “Everything about the U.S. was ideal to me.” But she was soon disillusioned.

She continued: “I realize that ‘one person, one vote’ is not necessarily a good system at all. It might work sometimes, but it will not work for China. Even here [in America], such a system has not worked so effectively. Now Americans have to live with the Trump presidency. Everybody around me is complaining. I thought, ‘Hey, Trump was elected by the American people. What is wrong with you?’”

The interviewer asks: “So you desired democracy before you came to the U.S.?” She replies: “Certainly I did. I felt it was an equal and effective system. But now I do not think it will work for China.”

The interviewer asks: “Why not?” She replies: “Because people are not as informed, and may not make good judgments. Look at Trump voters. Now they have to suffer from the bad choices they made and all the bad policies. Chinese leaders are not elected through a democratic system, but that does not mean they cannot govern well. Even some Western scholars ... consider Chinese society to be well governed.”

The pandemic has brought the incompetence of the current American system to the forefront.

A researcher from York University in

Canada surveyed 19,816 people across 31 regions in China in April 2020, and summarized his results in “The Conversation.” Respondents were assured their responses would be anonymous. “Taken together, it’s evident that Chinese citizens hold very high levels of satisfaction with the performance of their national government during the pandemic.”

Meanwhile, surveys by Reuters/IPSON show levels of American public confidence in our government’s handling of the pandemic to be much lower, about half the China number.

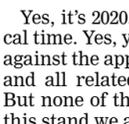
Of course some of this effect is not governmental but cultural. America is by far the most extreme in “collective individualism.” While many tolerated “no shoes, no service” policies, they consider requirements to wear a mask to protect other’s lives to be a violation of their “freedom.”

China on the other hand is an Asian collectivist-oriented society, and has been wearing masks each winter to protect others from colds and the flu, long before SARS and COVID-19 arrived. Sheltering in place in China for this serious pandemic did not require force or coercion; it is what you do in a crowded country. And it is why China has eliminated the coronavirus and returned to normal (except at certain entry points). Along with the collectivist cultures in democratic South Korea and Taiwan, their economies are back up and life is returning to normal.

“Soft power” requires leading by good examples. To outsiders, the U.S. is a bad example.

I’m taking a STAND ... you should too

It’s that time of the year again. That time where awareness is lingering over us; the thoughts are there; the need is urgent; everyone is influenced. And as we have sat in awe of the turmoil before, today is the day we are called to the shift of sitting to take a STAND for action.



Amber Jewell
LMSW

Yes, it’s 2020. Yes, it’s a political time. Yes, you can feel for or against the appointed president and all related action thereof. But none of that is the focus of this stand we are called to.

The STAND for kids related (prevention and intervention) to foster care in the United States, Kansas, and, particularly, Coffey County.

I’m talking about taking a stand in our local community, with our local education providers, in our state system, and yeah, in our country! Take a stand for those who are in foster care or related to it in the American Foster Care System ... yep ... all 450,000 of them (which doesn’t include the number of relatives, professionals, community members, etc. involved). In Coffey County, per DCF data Sept. 30, 2020, 231 children live in poverty and 20 are in out-of-home placements. In Kansas alone, over 6,800 children are in out-of-home placements.

National Orphan Sunday is the second Sunday in November of each year, and November

is National Adoption Awareness Month. The United States STAND Sunday was seeded in 2002 when a Texas congregation chose to take a STAND through action for foster youth. Then in 2017, the whole United States declared to take a STAND annually on the second Sunday of November. Within a culture that wants to support one another, we should STAND too!

But ... Do you feel like you’re not one of “those” people? or maybe feel like it’s not your place or ability to stand for them? or maybe you are unsure why it matters or how foster care directly affects you? (might I add that is a grace in itself to ask that).

Of course, maybe your child was not in foster care. And maybe you were not a child in foster care yourself. And, maybe you were or are not meant or equipped to be a foster parent.

Okay! But, beings foster care impacts each and every one of us, you are still called and equipped to make a stand. Let me explain ...

► Did you know 70 percent of those who are involved in the Juvenile Justice System have also been involved in child welfare?

► Did you know 40 to 50 percent of former youth are homeless 18 months after leaving foster care?

► Did you know, of those who are incarcerated, 80 percent of them were or are dealing with child welfare?

► Did you know 60 percent of the youth impacted by child welfare earn below the poverty

line?

► Did you know 14 percent of all men in prison in the USA were abused as children?

► Did you know any profession in the child welfare system: law enforcement, human services, educational, medical, therapeutic, non-profits, are physically, mentally, and emotionally impacted by the services they provide? (and many at or close to the poverty line of income also!)

► Did you know the Bible mentions a call for all people to support the “Orphans and Widows” over 20 times?

► Did you know some of the strongest advocates of change were victims of trauma themselves (probably positively influenced by someone like you)?

► Did you know sex trafficking, drug abuse, opioid crisis, taxes, medical costs, human services, mental health, well-being, all coincide strongly with the child welfare system? (95 percent of women involved in prostitution report sexual abuse as children!)

Still need a few to see how it relates specifically to you?

► Did you know domestic violence, anxiety (70 percent of Americans, W.H.O), mental illness, medical needs, family conflict, and anger have no social-economic status?

► Did you know secondary trauma affects the professionals you know in these fields that carry a weight of responsibility far beyond their ability for these kids and families?

► Did you know these people

are your family, your friends, your church affiliates, your business partners, your community members, your fellow advocates, your policy-changers—and they can’t always do it alone?

► Did you know the annual cost for addressing child abuse is \$104 BILLION?

► Did you know we ALL are or know someone who is impacted by something above?

Indirectly, we all have a role to influence the lives of the next generation who are influenced by the current caregiver, advocates, and standers around them. These 231 local, 6,800+ state and 450,000+ national kids and families are those future people!

And they will be influenced by what we do (or don’t) stand for!

So, if you can relate to any of these (and you should) YOU are called to take a STAND right now ... today and in our community. Your role in influencing the great American future is to play a role in the dream to heal our hurting children and families. Taking a STAND together for this can be far, far, far more powerful than any single political election.

Yes, both are essential. And I hope you voiced your essential vote. But, now it is time to stand as a voice and action for foster youth and service!

As Bishop Blake of the original STAND Texas church in 2002 said, “Who will stand with me to defend care and support

Giving thanks

Thanksgiving is just a couple of weeks away, and in 2020 it may not seem like we have a lot to be thankful for. I admit that the last

six months or so have been tough, and if you are watching the news it is hard to be very optimistic. However, I am really excited about this Thanksgiving, and all of us in agriculture should be, too.

Sure, we may not be able to have the large family reunions and dinners we are all used to. Let us not focus on the negative, instead we need to be reminded of all that we have and just how great our nation is. Never forget that we live in the greatest nation and our freedoms and rights are the envy of the rest of the world. That, my friends, all starts with us as farmers and ranchers, and we should be proud of that fact. More importantly, we need to celebrate it this Thanksgiving.

As farmers and ranchers, we are part of the foundation of our United States of America. The Pilgrims recognized that. Without an abundant, safe, wholesome food supply it is hard to build a nation, much less one as great as ours. In the middle of the worst pandemic most of us have ever seen, our grocery store shelves remained stocked. There might have been a few things that were harder to find, but consumers could still go into the store and find food to sustain themselves and their families. I would dare even say they had plenty of variety.

Those of us in agriculture are so good at what we do we can function with less than 2 percent of the population involved in growing the food and fiber. That allows the other 98 percent of the population to grow our economy and provide services to give us the lifestyle we are all accustomed to. We do not just feed our people; we grow enough to share with the rest of the world by utilizing technology we have developed.

This Thanksgiving all of us in the United States need to look at all we have been given and be thankful. Without a doubt that includes our great system of agricultural production. We must also not take all these blessings for granted. I hope this Thanksgiving will be a time the rest of the population realizes just how good they have it, and that is due in large part to all of us who farm and ranch.

We may have seen some dark days, and there probably are more ahead of us. However, we can all rest assured that the store shelves will be stocked and there will be plenty of food for Thanksgiving, no matter how many are gathered around our table. We all have so much to be thankful for and that is something we should not forget.

—“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.

Lebo

Continued from Page 1

The council continues to move forward in preparing an ordinance regarding outdoor and open burning within the city limits. The ordinance will allow burning of branches, leaves, and grass clippings but is designed to make it illegal to burn furniture, trash, and other such items.

Catherine Griffin reported no municipal court this month. Six zoning permits were issued, which included three car ports, two fences and one house.