

Is a loyalty oath really necessary

Sometimes you have to wonder at the stupid things supposedly smart politicians do.

Take, for instance, the Kansas Republican party. No, really; you can have it.

The party is sitting in the catbird seat, or should be. The Republicans own Kansas as they never have before: All state elected offices, all but 33 seats in the House and all but eight in the state Senate, all four congressional districts, both U.S. Senate seats.

What could be wrong, then? And why would Republican leaders send a “loyalty” oath to legislative candidates, demanding that they pledge allegiance to the party’s leadership in the House and Senate if elected?

The first thing you have to understand is that Kansas, for years, has had not a two-party system, like most states, but a three-party system where Republicans divide at the drop of a hat into conservative and “moderate” factions.

The conservatives hew to strict beliefs in social principles, including opposition to abortion, while the “moderates” have been known to align with Democrats on votes involving social issues and state spending.

These moderates, for the most part, aren’t flaming liberal followers of Kathleen Sebelius, but compared to some of the conservatives, they can look pretty left wing.

And that chafes the conservatives, we know.

Some claim these moderate Republicans are people who would have become Democrats in any other state, but knew they’d never get elected to anything in Kansas that way.

The conservative wing controls the House and at least a share of the congressional delegation. It controls the party leadership and would like to run the Senate, too. The Senate divides more evenly, with just the eight Democrats, about 14 conservatives and 14 moderates on any given vote, plus four or five members who float back and forth.

Gov. Sam Brownback is the darling of this right wing. Conservative groups led by the state Chamber of Commerce have recruited House members to run against some of the more liberal senators.

Whatever prompted the party to dream up this loyalty oath, it’s a mistake and not likely to help the conservative cause. Any legislator or candidate who’d sign such a thing would be giving up the ability to vote as his or her constituents want. And that may not be blindly to follow the leadership.

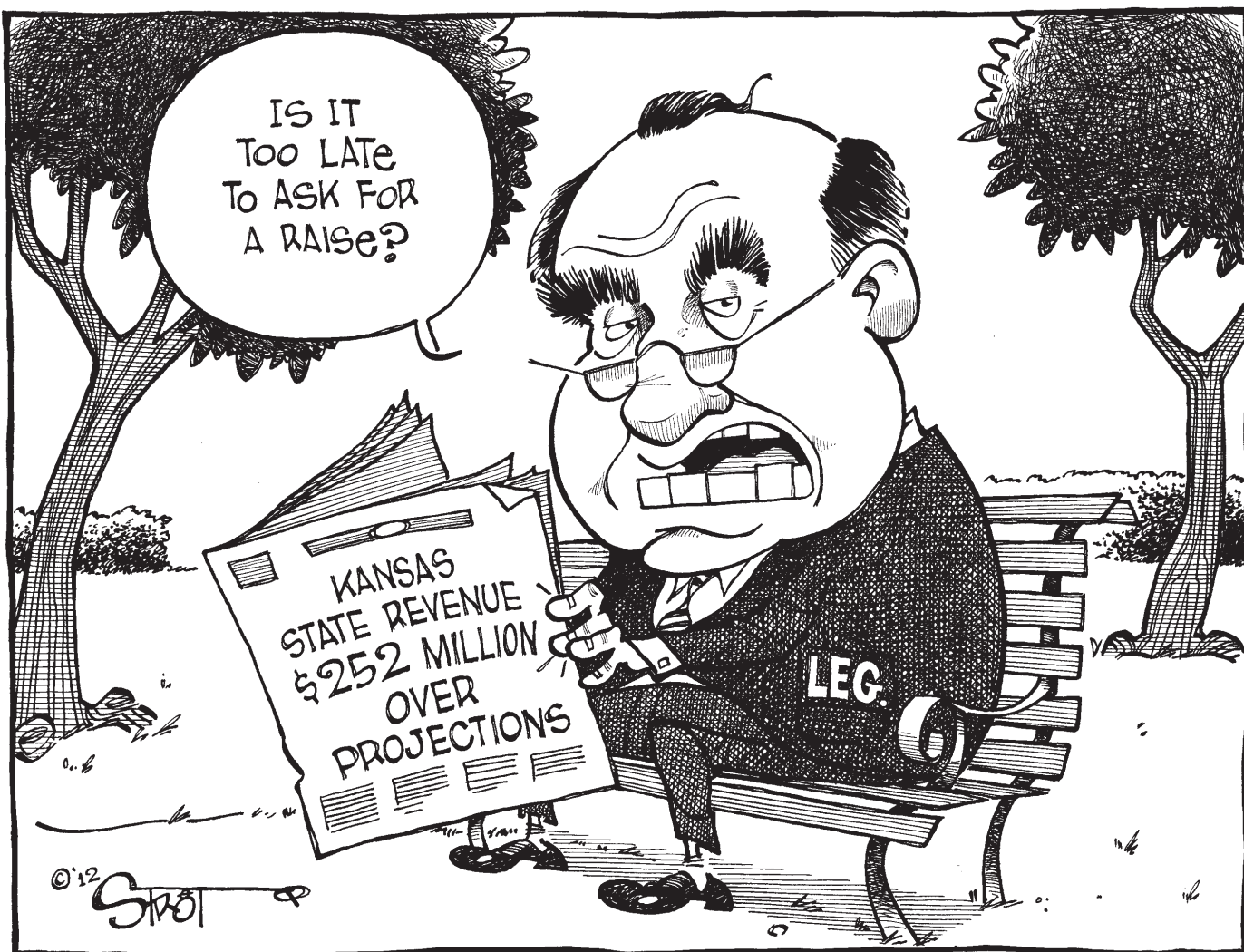
There is nothing wrong with being conservative or wanting conservatives to control the Legislature. Kansas is a conservative state, and voters gave the governor a huge majority in voting two years ago. They elected a conservative House and mostly conservative state officials.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to shift the Senate to the right, either, but there’s a way to go about consolidating your position, one that might work. Then there are other ways.

And when you do something as undemocratic as putting out a loyalty oath to bind supposedly independent legislators, you’ve crossed a line. Like the heavy-handed plan to target all the supposedly liberal senators, it’s a move that could backfire.

In August, we’ll see just how successful these tactics have been, but from here, the oath in particular looks like a loser. – *Steve Haynes*

On the Prairie Dog *Steve Haynes*



Do we have nothing to fear but fear itself

I love the television ad by the Arizona Visitor’s Bureau starring Governor Jan Brewer. The ad begins with the beautiful scenery of the Grand Canyon State, and features the bustle of its cities, all meant to entice one to spend their time, and more importantly, their money in Arizona. The state took a real hit when their legislature passed new immigration laws, particularly providing law enforcement with the tool to stop someone they suspect might be in this country illegally. Thus far the law has not been enacted pending a determination of the law’s constitutionality by the U.S. Supreme Court.

What Governor Brewer doesn’t add at the end of her media blitz is, “Oh, and don’t forget your citizenship papers, because law enforcement officials may stop you if you don’t look American enough.” Some in Arizona

Phase II *Mary Kay Woodyard*



encouraged companies to think twice before convening conferences in the state.

As the grandmother of various ethnicity grandchildren, seven of the eleven, particularly in the summer, might be questioned about their citizenship. Now granted one lives and was born outside the U.S. but she is a U.S. citizen and actually probably looks “American enough” to satisfy Arizona, but the others? Well, not so much. So why would I go to a state where I have to prove, or worse yet my

grandchildren or one of their parents has to prove, they are in this country legally?

Governor Brewer has a problem in common with many U.S. governors... you can’t have it both ways. Her reasoning for the tightened immigration laws? Crime. However, even with the discrepancy in numbers it is well known the crime rate has been dropping in the state as has the influx of illegal immigrants.

So, if we can’t use crime as the culprit, and if the illegal population has actually declined, just exactly why are we policing an action which is both time consuming and wasteful of resources. Maybe we, in fact, have “nothing to fear, but fear itself,” as a well known Democrat once said in his inaugural address. Mail to:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

The joys and agony of raising a young puppy

Adjusting to a new dog has its moments! Our dog is young and likes to chew. He chewed one garden hose into pieces! His most recent addiction is the plastic downspout extender.

Lamont! Bad Dog! We need these things.

He has chewed on the wood porch post! Why would he want a mouth full of splinters?

I have been using some nasty paint and varnish remover outside. Lamont mostly sits and watches. Occasionally he makes a stealth attack, picking up a paint brush or rag that I have carelessly left in his reach. Please be careful, Lamont!!!

He has not dug up anything in the yard, though he did molest a dirt filled flower pot sans flowers. The hubby confesses he had been leaving the tennis balls in the pot. I’m hoping placing the balls somewhere else will prevent this digging behavior from becoming a habit!

Lamont loves to play catch. He and the cats have become respectful of each other.

Lamont is the hubby’s dog. One night when I was out in the yard, the hubby approached from the north. As soon as Lamont heard the vehicle, he ran full speed to greet him. He ignores me when I drive in the yard.

One of his best tricks is “playing dead”. He does it without any

This Too Shall Pass *Nancy Hagman*



prompting. He is not much of a guard dog. At least Smiley would go lay down in front of strangers hoping to get his belly scratched, so maybe an intruder would trip over him!

Last week the hubby was agonizing over the loss of his favorite shop hammer. He had just replaced the handle, it cost \$8. He was using it on the planter.

Lamont assists him in the shop. So when the hammer came up missing you can guess who got the blame. I defended Lamont. I wasn’t sure how heavy the hammer was but it just didn’t seem like something he would be attracted to.

The hubby looked and looked. He took the planter to the field. If Lamont didn’t have the hammer, it was probably on the planter and it would get “planted”. Worse case scenario: it would also get harvested. We doubt it will thrash out well!

Meantime I go off for the weekend. The hubby was too busy planting to accompany me. I attended a wedding, visited my sister, shopped. I wore my

beautiful new turquoise jacket. I paid way too much for it but I got three compliments the first time I put it on!

When I got in the car to come home, off came the jacket. Once home I began dragging in luggage, packages etc. I put the jacket on top of an armload of stuff.

It crossed my mind to put it on, because it was cool but I toughed it out.

The hubby and I ate supper and caught up on things. He had found his hammer. Lamont did not figure into its disappearance. The hubby just forgot where he had placed it.

The hubby gazed out the window and commented, “Lamont found a new rag or something, I’ve never seen that before!”

I looked. MY JACKET!!! So fleet of foot was I, I amazed even myself!

He had not chewed a hole in it, or pulled any threads with his sharp toenails. No buttons were missing. It was a little damp and had a couple of grass stains. It washed up just fine!

Whew, what a relief.

Poor Lamont! His people are so forgetful. They lose things and blame him. They leave beautiful turquoise bedding right there on the ground and seem upset when he uses it.

It’s a dog’s life.

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