

Opinion

Holding on to balance will take some effort

that the big issue at the Legislature this session may well be defending the state's growing income stream and preserving the 7.5 percent ing a court case on school finance. ending balance required by law.

cash is coming in ahead of official projections, back on. nearly every state program and agency has been cut in the last few years.

That means that nearly every program and agency wants more money. Some, like schools and support for the disabled, have huge blocks of backers who depend on them. These groups won't just ask for money; they'll demand it.

Most agencies, Mr. Cassidy said, probably need and deserve more, but even with its newfound income stream, the state won't have enough to satisfy every need. Far from it.

Rep. Cassidy said the ending balance is important, not just because the law requires a cushion against tough times or unexpected need, but because it should help prevent a repeat of the deep cuts the state had to make during the late recession.

If the state had had that kind of reserve, he said, it might not have had to cut so deeply or so broadly as it did. Cuts hit nearly every agency, from education to transportation, and most in between. When big, well-liked programs like roads and school take cuts, you know things are tough.

But in the years leading up to the recession,

State Rep. Ward Cassidy struck a cord Satur- Kansas had been spending nearly every penny it day when he told a "town-hall" meeting crowd brought in. One reason for that was the fact that the Legislature caved in to the state Supreme Court and threw money at education after los-

When the recession came along, the state had While the state's revenue is recovering after spent most of the "ending balance," its reserve more than three years of recession, he said, and or "rainy day fund." It had no cushion to fall

> Deep cuts needed to balance the budget affected everyone, but were especially tough on schools. Now the group Schools for Fair Funding, an alliance of districts formed to sue the state and lobby for more school spending, is in court once again. It claims the cuts violated the terms of the previous decision and the agreement worked out to satisfy the suit.

> Never mind that the courts should never have ordered the Legislature to spend more than the state could afford, or that most of us thought spending decisions ought to be left to our elected representatives.

Never mind that the school districts involved were spending state money to sue the state, something most Kansans probably think is wrong. At heart, the issue is a power grab by the courts which the Legislature chose to cave in to rather than to fight.

That battle will have to be waged some day, and the time may come sooner rather than later. Defending that ending balance will be tough indeed. Mr. Cassidy has called this one right.

- Steve Haynes



Legislative News

I know of no other time in the any dollars in the long run. The history of Kansas politics when transportation bill gives about there have been so many issues \$8 million a year to each of my for change in government op- counties, and I can't support erations, offered all at once. The putting that on hold. I have also method I prefer would be to carefully evaluate changes to one or two key policy areas. Analyze the change, offer the changes for comment to all interested parties, and then gauge the reaction.

There is now a House tax plan, a Senate tax plan, and the Governor's proposed tax plan. One part of the House plan that I like is the proposal to allow .6 increase to expire in 2013. The Governor's plan is to renew the full 1 cent sales tax. If the money in the state coffers continues to come in, reducing the sales tax would benefit a lot of people.

The Kansas Department of Transportation would keep the .4 cent of the 2010 penny sales tax increase under both the House freeze the department's spending for two years.

The House Tax Committee said that the fund would be restored and that the Kansas Department of Transportation would not lose

seen where the legislature says they will return funds—and then something changes over time.

I have received many e-mails about keeping the Kansas Community Service Tax Credit Program. I feel that the credit has been very valuable to our area, and I have been working to insure that it becomes a part of any tax plan. The House plan does cents of the 2010 penny sales tax keep current tax credits and deductions the same as they now

As if we needed any more issues, House Bill 2353 was passed out of committee. This would allow concealed carry permit holders to carry in all public buildings such as libraries, hospitals, and college campuses, unless all entrances to those buildand Governor's plan. What I ings have metal detectors. I have don't like, in the House plan, a concealed carry license, but I relates to the Kansas Depart- will have trouble supporting the the governor's office contends ment of Transportation. It would cost and dangers involved with that there is no stopping it now. this bill. I never thought I could I would say that this topic is the oppose any bill relating to our one that dominates my calls and second amendment, but I am e-mails. planning to oppose this one.

This week, the governor issued his first Executive Reor-

Ward Cassidy

120th State Representative

ganization Order (ERO) of the 2012 legislative session. Order 41 would propose the following: consolidating the financing arm of Medicaid in Kansas Department of Health and Environment Division of Health Care Finance, renaming the Department on Aging as the Department for Aging and Disability Services, consolidating all disability waiver and mental health services from Social Rehabilitation Service (SRS) into the new Department for Aging and Disability Services, and renaming Social Rehabilitation Service as the Department for Children and Families.

If neither chamber rejects this Executive Reorganization Order within 60 days of receiving it, it will go into effect July 1. Despite the many concerns from advocates and interested parties,

We were given a very disturb-

ing fact today in committee: today in America, there are nearly twice as many people working for the government (22.5 million) than in all of manufacturing (11.5 million). This is almost an exact reversal of the situation in 1960: 15 million in manufacturing and 8.7 million in government. You can draw your own conclusions from this.

Hangin' With Marge Margaret

Where is Marge

I was very surprised to open my us as we travel through our lives. Herald three weeks ago and see Life hasn't always been just one the Hangin with Marge headline big laugh, nor was it always easy, with the words "Where has Marge" but as long as I could see the hu-

It was a pleasant surprise and I decided I needed to try and write my mother's little sayings was again. One thing you need to know is how hard that is to write That meant whatever I was doing every week about yourself. I re- wasn't right. One day I looked at ally thought everyone was prob- her and said, "Have you ever saw ably pretty tired of hearing about the turnip." the things that have happened in my world. Sometimes I think God gives each of us something to help time, the wooden spoon. When

mor I could get by.

When I was very young one of "Well I never saw the beet/beat."

Now her sense of humor wasn't like mine and I got to see, one more

got through crying I remember wondering why my mom didn't have a sense of humor.

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Bucholtz

While raising my own family I could see why she didn't find me that funny, but I worked pretty hard to see some humor in the things my kids did.

I am going to try again to write about the lighter things in life. It is really nice of the people in the community to let me know you did read Hangin with Marge.

Casey's Comments

The melody may be different but the lyrics say the same thing.

The other Friday night Lezlie and I attended several basketball games at the local high school. As we sat on the bleachers inside the gymnasium, the music from the student's pep band took me back in time. In a moment I it. You also knew that your group left our corner of Kansas to the west side of Denver during the

My brothers, sister and I were blessed by growing up in a home that valued the arts. In particular we all, to different extents, spent time studying instruments both from our Aunt Sissy and through public schools. Our high school, Wheat Ridge, had a very exceptional jazz, pep and marching band instructor, along with orchestra and symphony director in Larry Wallace.



Mr. Wallace was a terribly thin and soft spoken gentleman from the southern U.S. whom you did not want to disappoint. He brought out the best in most all of his students. If you were good enough to make it into the top band, you knew you had earned

made some pretty special music. Back to the pep band playing the other night in rural Kansas, the songs were different from what we played. A couple examples of Friday's tunes were versions of Queen's "Bohemian

Casey McCormick

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Rhapsody" and Jimmy Buffet's "Cheese Burger in Paradise." The funny thing is, when I was a teenage trombone player we thought we had pretty new "pop" songs as well. I wonder if today's youngsters would be tapping their toes to "Smoke on the Water" and "Proud Mary?"

At least the traditional high school "fight" songs never go out of style.

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. Psalm 118:6, 8



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Worship 10:30 a.m.

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Morning Worship 10:45

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