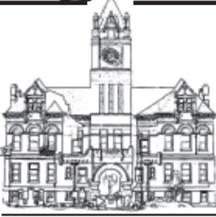


# Opinion

## Free Press Viewpoint



### What part of illegal don't people know

**From The Wichita Eagle**

Although immigration reform is bogged down in divisive debate, it's encouraging that both sides agree on a key provision — the need for tougher workplace verification and enforcement.

Lawmakers favoring legalization or a guest-worker program realize that there has to be credible enforcement on the job for those reforms to work. And lawmakers backing deportation and tougher border security understand that they also need to beef up enforcement where supply meets demand — in the workplace.

At present, thousands of U.S. employers are hiring millions of illegal aliens for jobs, especially in certain low-wage sectors such as hotels, restaurant work and agriculture.

Granted, most employers don't knowingly hire illegal aliens — or they at least have plausible deniability. That's because federal law requires them only to check two of up to 29 possible forms of identification. If the ID looks valid — and many are easy to forge — then that's the extent of the employer's responsibility.

Employers can even be sued for discrimination if they investigate too aggressively.

What's needed is a foolproof way for employers to instantly verify a worker's legal status.

To that end, it's good that both the House bill passed last year and the Senate bills now under consideration include provisions for creating a national electronic worker verification system.

A prototype of that system, in which employers compare worker information against an online or phone-in database, is now being tested in thousands of U.S. workplaces. The bills in Congress would expand that voluntary pilot project into a requirement for every employer.

The bills before Congress also include stiffer fines for employers who hire illegals and a significant increase in workplace inspectors.

What part of illegal don't businesses understand? At the same time, employers must have a way to positively identify who is legal and who is not.

Congress could take a big step toward immigration sanity with these bipartisan reforms.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail [jvannostrand@nwkansan.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansan.com) or [pdecker@nwkansan.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansan.com).

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### April antics



#### Tisha Cox ● Off The Beaten Path

College football fans have the bowl season in December, college basketball fans have March Madness.

For hockey fans right now, the next two months will be April insanity.

Two years have passed since the last Stanley Cup playoff in the National Hockey League. And of course, the 2004-2005 season didn't happen because of the first professional sport to lose a season because of a lockout.

The playoffs started Friday, and will likely go until mid-June.

As a hockey fan, I couldn't be happier. Reasons exist to complain, but I'm not going to.

In the space of 24 hours over the weekend, I watched three playoff games with my sister, Chris. That's the most hockey we've watched in a very long time.

With the beginning of the playoffs, the pandemonium has begun.

Sixteen teams, best-of-seven series. Times four. The conference quarter finals are now, followed by the semi finals, the conference finals and finally the Stanley Cup finals where the best team from the east and west will duke it out for the honor of having their names etched on Lord Stanley's Cup.

The Philadelphia Flyers coaching staff is showing its true colors — player R.J. Umberger was flattened by a legal hit from Buffalo's Brian Campbell in the first game of their series Saturday.

Umberger had to be helped from the ice, and couldn't focus. Sunday, head coach Ken Hitchcock was saying Umberger was good to go. And Sunday, it looked like the Edmonton Oilers had taken their own bench to Detroit. What made us suspicious was when an assistant coach looked like he was packing up the bench to take home.

That brought back memories of past Colorado-

Detroit series when then-coach Scotty Bowman ordered a special bench constructed so they could take it to Denver. Bowman accused Avalanche management of shortening the distance from the boards to the bench.

He didn't have to accuse them of psychological warfare when Colorado general manager Pierre Lacroix had the visiting team locker room painted right before Detroit came to town.

I also noticed during the first four playoff games I watched that players that went missing over the course of the regular season suddenly popped up in unusual locations.

Michael Peca, former captain of the Buffalo Sabres, is toiling in anonymity with the Edmonton Oilers.

Former Ranger Petr Nedved is a Flyer.

Teams that shouldn't be in the playoffs are. The Montreal Canadiens made the playoffs, barely, after a strong finish at the end. Nobody figured they would make it because it was nearly a statistical improbability.

In the Western Conference, Edmonton and Nashville both made it to the postseason.

The Vancouver Canucks, who seemed a lock for the playoffs, got knocked out right at the end of the regular season by Edmonton. Considering the Canucks' recent history, it's probably a good thing they didn't make it.

Teams have a long memory when it comes to bad on ice incidents, and Colorado would have been a possible match down the stretch, and the

Avalanche hasn't forgotten what Todd Bertuzzi did to forward Steve Moore in spring, 2004.

Speaking of teams that didn't make the playoffs, the Toronto Maple Leafs' season ended early.

Written off by the Canadian press as early as January, the Leafs missed the playoffs for the first time since the 1997-98 season.

For some perspective, that would be like the New York Yankees not being in title contention. The Maple Leafs are kind of like Canada's Yankees, except they haven't won a championship since 1967.

Thirty-nine years without a championship is a long time, but a little digging reveals the current longest Stanley Cup drought belongs to the Chicago Blackhawks. They last took home the Cup in 1961. (For the record, those two teams have the longest championship drought of the Original Six NHL teams. The Original Six are the Detroit Red Wings, Boston Bruins, New York Rangers, Toronto Maple Leafs, Montreal Canadiens and Chicago Blackhawks.)

The longest Stanley Cup-less streak used to belong to the New York Rangers, who won in 1994 after a 58-year drought.

The second longest at that point belonged to the Detroit Red Wings, who tried to lobby sympathy by saying their streak was longer. It wasn't. Their 42-year streak ended in 1997, when they swept the Philadelphia Flyers in four to win their eighth championship.

They've won two more since, so I think it's time they just go away.

I have no love lost on the Wings, but this year's playoff race is wide open.

May the best team win.

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*Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. [tcx@nwkansan.com](mailto:tcx@nwkansan.com).*

### Your turn

## Suspect does not live in Brewster

**Bonnie Holm, Brewster**

I am deeply offended about the caption of the article "Brewster Man Charged with Multiple Crimes."

It is time that the Colby Free Press reporters live up to the name, "Reporter", and report the truth. Gary Rogers is not a Brewster resident. In fact, his house was removed from city of

Brewster last year. If the reporter had checked the facts, she would find that he resides in the city of Colby. I'm sure that the caption of the article would not have read, "Colby Man Charged with Multiple Crimes."

It seems ironic that the paper is quick to report on "bad" news from Brewster (even when false), and yet will not even mention that the

Brewster boys basketball team won third in the state tournament this year.

I would challenge the Colby Free Press to live up to its claim as the "official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford," and start including news from all the communities in the county.

### Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce Tinsley



### Doonesbury

● Gary Trudeau

