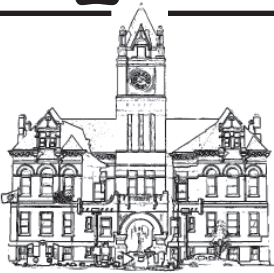


Opinion



Kansas Viewpoint

A lot left to do

By Gov. Kathleen Sebelius

One of the most important issues the Legislature has put off is keeping our commitment to Kansas children and enhancing our investment in early childhood programs.

To ensure that all children are ready to learn by the time they reach kindergarten, I proposed \$23 million in block grant funding for early childhood education.

These grants would also include opportunities for expanded pre-natal care, newborn screening, Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start and quality child care.

My budget also proposed a fourth year of our school finance plan, including \$27 million for all-day kindergarten. All-day kindergarten provides children a stronger foundation for a lifetime of learning.

Unfortunately, the Legislature has postponed early childhood funding decisions until the very end of the session. I am hopeful that when they return, they waste no time in addressing these needs.

As we make these strategic investments in our schools, we must also remember that a child or family racked with illness cannot focus on learning.

Rising health care costs are a burden for families, business owners, workers, and seniors. To address these issues, I endorsed the bipartisan health care reform package crafted by the Kansas Health Policy Authority and requested by the legislature.

This reform package is based on three priorities: promoting personal responsibility for health and wellness; paying for preventative care; and providing all Kansans with affordable health insurance.

The Legislature has basically ignored this comprehensive plan. I urge them to move beyond the incremental steps of the past and endorse the meaningful reform proposals, developed by the Authority with input from health care providers, employers and consumers.

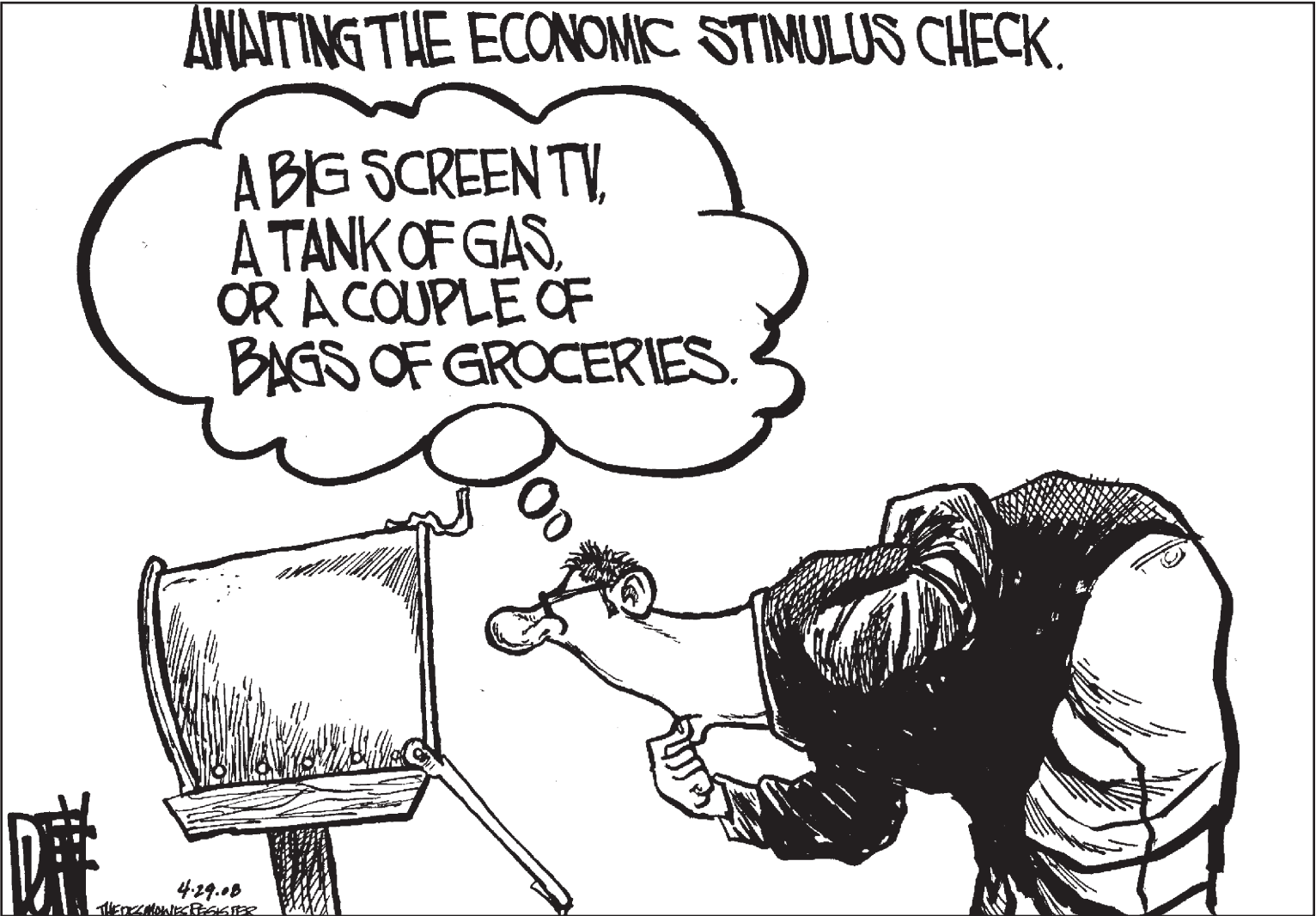
The Legislature has a lot to accomplish in a very short amount of time.

They must work together, finding common ground on the issues that are important in every corner of our state. The people of Kansas are counting on them.

Where to write, call

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Rm. 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. 785/296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.



In dollars, a mom is worth \$775,000

As Mother’s Day approaches, I thought it appropriate to let moms everywhere know just how much they are worth.

Moms are priceless and while no dollar amount can be attached to the many hats worn 24 hours a day and seven days a week, I still like what one company has done.

Edelman Financial Services in Fairfax, Va., has helped put a mother’s job in perspective by answering the question: How much is your mother worth on Mother’s Day?

For the past seven years, the company has continued to answer that question. This year was no exception.

In today’s job market, a mom would be paid almost \$775,000 a year, up \$12,050 from the previous 12 months.

I keep waiting for my check, but for now, as long as my children remember to call or send me a card for Mother’s Day, that’s all I really need.

For the seventh consecutive year, the company has broken down the 17 occupations a typical mother might hold during the course of a year.

Using data obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics with the goal of establishing criteria and determining what the combined median yearly salary would be for a multi-tasking mother, the company then determines the annual pay.

- A mother is responsible for:
- Raising children



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

- Cooking meals
 - Keeping house
 - Caring for pets
 - Dispensing medication and nursing care
 - Attending meetings and functions
 - Managing family finances
 - Providing transportation
 - Assisting with homework
 - Listening to and resolving family problems
 - Keeping family on schedule
 - Maintaining and family
 - Order and harmony
- After the company determined what a mother is asked to do, it then estimated the financial worth of all these tasks.
- The firm came up with the following occupations and corresponding median annual salaries which were:
- (1) Animal caretaker, \$28,090;
 - (2) Chef, \$35,840;
 - (3) Computer System Analyst, \$70,430;
 - (4) Financial Manager, \$96,620;
 - (5) Food/Beverage Service, \$18,680;

- (6) General Office Clerk, \$24,580;
 - (7) Registered Nurse, \$56,880;
 - (8) Management Analyst, \$75,000;
 - (9) Child Care Worker, \$18,180;
 - (10) Housekeeper, \$18,180;
 - (11) Psychologist, \$63,960;
 - (12) Bus Driver, \$32,650;
 - (13) Grade School Principal, \$76,890;
 - (14) Dietitians/Nutritionists, \$45,950;
 - (15) Property Manager, \$50,570;
 - (16) Social Worker, \$38,780; and
 - (17) Recreation Worker, \$222,420.
- Those salaries add up to a total of \$773,700.

The preceding information provided by the financial firm, said Ric Edelman, owner of Edelman Financial Services, was an attempt to quantify and track the true market value of a mother’s annual worth in today’s economy.

In addition to the salaries listed, the company also believes the figures should be higher since retirement, health insurance, and other benefits were not included.

Mother’s Day is Sunday — so to all our children — don’t forget to put the check in the card — the one for \$773,700.

Most of us probably won’t see the check, but hopefully our families might say how much they appreciate us in other ways.

Happy Mother’s Day!

Patty Decker is editor of the *Free Press*. Her column appears on Mondays.

Continued Farm Bill delays

By Rep. Jerry Moran,

On April 23, I met with Secretary of Agriculture Ed Shafer. This was my first time visiting with Secretary Shafer, who took over as head of USDA in January. I took the opportunity to discuss the lack of progress on the farm bill and ideas that would speed up passage of a bill. The Secretary and I agree that as spring planting begins and summer harvest approaches, farmers need to know what type of farm policy they will be operating under in the current crop year.

Late this week, a preliminary framework was agreed to by the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committee. Funding is being redirected out of programs that support producers and into non-agricultural programs. This is further evidence of movement in a direction that is less friendly to farmers in Kansas and the small towns they live in. As a member of the conference committee, I will be working to protect direct payments and the viability of crop insurance. Because a bill was not passed this week, the farm bill was extended an additional week.

I welcome your comments about the farm bill.

Voting to Delay Medicaid Regulations

The House approved legislation this week to delay the implementation of seven Medicaid regulations for one year. Medicaid is a joint federal-state health insurance program for the poor. I am concerned these seven regulations would push more Medicaid costs on the states, narrow certain services provided by Medicaid and limit some state services eligible for federal reimbursements. Without congressional

action to delay these new administrative rules, Kansas and other states would be forced to pay for more of the health care costs associated with Medicaid. This legislation now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Veterans’ Benefits Bills Approved

I participated in a Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing this week that approved several veterans’ measures regarding housing, education and other benefits. The Subcommittee agreed to the Veterans Education Improvement Act, a bill to improve veterans’ educational benefits and modernize the Montgomery G.I. Bill. This bill is the product of a series of Subcommittee hearings conducted since the beginning of last year to evaluate the G.I. Bill and explore improvements. The G.I. Bill should be updated, both to recognize the increased role of our Guard and Reserve members and to ensure that all veterans have the resources to attend school when they return from service. I am hopeful Congress will act soon to modernize the G.I. Bill.

Rail Infrastructure

On April 23, I attended a Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads hearing to discuss rail capacity for our nation’s railroads. Freight railroads currently move more than 40 percent of our nation’s freight. The increase in demand for freight services is threatening to overload the current capacity of America’s rail infrastructure. Much of the investment in rail infrastructure is made by the railroads themselves. During the hearing, we listened to various ideas on improving the amount of railroad track available throughout

the country.

New Vehicle Technology on Earth Day

Around the world on Tuesday, people marked Earth Day by taking time to consider ways to improve and protect our environment. I had the opportunity to test drive a plug-in hybrid electric car. With new advances in technology, these cars offer hope for reducing our dependence on foreign oil, cleaning up the environment and lowering fuel costs for American consumers.

Our foreign policy is distorted because of our reliance on oil from other countries. Switching to new forms of transportation that run on electricity or renewable fuels will make our country more secure and should help Kansans struggling to afford gas for their vehicles.

Cherry Blossom Banquet

On Tuesday, I joined Kansans for the annual Kansas Society of Washington, D.C., Cherry Blossom Banquet.

The event in D.C. was a great opportunity to meet many Kansans who work in our nation’s capital to preserve our way of life back home. I was honored to introduce the 2008 Kansan of the Year, Kroger Chairman and CEO Dave Dillon. Dillon was recognized for his leadership in working to rebuild the Dillons/KWIK Shop convenience and grocery store in Greensburg following the deadly tornado last year. Dillon’s great-grandfather, J.S. Dillon, opened the first Dillon’s grocery store in Hutchinson nearly a century ago.

Congratulations also to the 2008 Kansas Cherry Blossom Princess Justine Sterling, originally of Kiowa.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

