pinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Medical schools need our support

Wichita's successful model of graduate medical education has helped stock the state with primary care physicians. And it's at risk, in part because of the state budget crisis and changing accreditation standards but also because of a failure to communicate.

Wesley Medical Center and Via Christi Health System say they no longer can spend \$3 million a year on the Wichita Center for Graduate Medical Education, on which they are partners with the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita. In addition, the program must ramp up research and paid faculty if it's to comply with new accreditation standards. Leaders at the nonprofit WCGME, which has a budget of \$55 million largely funded by Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, say it needs at least \$9.6 million annually to sustain itself.

But Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' proposed 2010 budget lacked the requested \$2.5 million for WCGME. And unless elected officials and leaders of the medical community successfully explain and defend WCGME at the Statehouse in the coming weeks, it could be in trouble. Eventually, so could the clinics, hospitals and patients in 70 Kansas counties that have relied on the physicians the program trains. ...

Earlier this month, Sebelius expressed frustration to the Kansas Health Institute News Service at not being able to get an "objective number that I can take a look at" from both WCGME and KU of what kind of money the program needs.

The Kansas Bioscience Authority has committed \$6 million to WCGME for research over three years. The Legislature's Physician Workforce and Accreditation Task Force has also recommended that WCGME's current-year state funding of \$2.5 million be spared from cuts, and that \$6.5 million in funding that otherwise would go to the bioscience authority instead be committed to WCGME next year in the name of economic development, as well as \$1.4 million to offset current-year budget cuts for graduate medical education at the KU campus in Kansas City. ..

It's important that hospital officials, physicians and community leaders in all the affected counties express support for the program at the Statehouse, so state lawmakers don't dismiss WCGME as a local issue.

State and local leaders must ensure that it works out a new funding model so that WCGME can continue to recruit topquality residents and faculty and plan for its future.

-The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press

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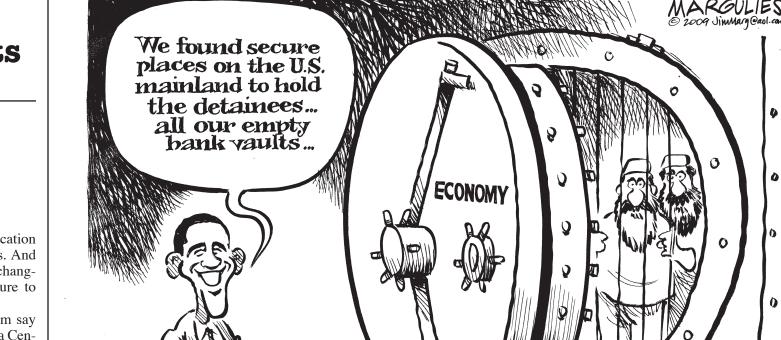
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Budget needs creative solutions

Too many people in this country have been fooled by politicians and media pundits who define morality as anything that makes a profit. This vulgar distortion of what it means to be moral has left us accepting and sometimes even defending the indefensible. There are several areas where the government can help grow our economy by pushing environmentally friendly, anti-poverty policies.

Two obvious ways to stimulate the economy while decreasing the burdens on taxpayers would be to end subsidies for oil companies and to re-regulate giant investment banks to make sure Gucci-clad pirates on Wall Street are no longer able to give risky loans to naïve homeowners. If investment banks had been well regulated the mortgage meltdown would never have occurred and taxpayer money would not have been spent bailing out Wall Street.

Another way to save taxpayer money would be to adopt a more humane approach to dealing with America's drug problem. The war on drugs has led to taxpayers funding overcrowded prisons full of non-violent offenders. The government has constantly chosen to fund enforcement over treatment and prevention. This strategy is morally bankrupt and fiscally irresponsible.

Two countries heavily involved with the drug trade today are Afghanistan and Colomglobal market. Several individuals in the Colombian military have been linked to United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, right-wing terrorist group, in their attempts to destroy the threat posed by Revolutionary Armed Forces thousands of dollars and allow them to adopt



Andy Heintz

 Wildcat Ramblings

of Colombia (known by its Spanish acronym, FARC, Marxist-terrorist organization. Both terrorist groups are involved in the drug trade and the AUC has been responsible for massive human rights violations including the killing of union leaders. So eradicating drugs in these countries will be no easy task. I would argue that it would be immoral to force poor farmers in Afghanistan to stop growing poppy seeds before they have an alternative way to make a living.

What politicians and drug czars have failed to understand is that trying to cut off supply is not a smart way to approach the drug problems that afflict this nation. The only way to decrease drug use in America is to decrease

A study by the RAND Drug Policy Research Center found that treatment was 10 times more cost-effective than interdiction in reducing cocaine use in the United States. The same study bia. Afghanistan is still too poor and undevel- found that every additional dollar invested care system so businesses can reach their full oped to stop growing the poppy seeds that are in substance abuse treatment saves taxpayeventually turned into heroin and sold on the ers more than \$17 in societal costs and that domestic law enforcement costs 15 times as much as treatment to achieve the same reduction in societal costs.

Health care reform would save businesses

more innovative and efficient policies that wouldn't be hindered by the expensive health benefits that are doled out to workers in today's economic environment.

Health insurance premiums have doubled since the year 2000 causing employers to cut benefits and lay off workers. U.S. workers are going to continue to see stagnant wages until our health-care system is reformed so it will work for everyone. An opinion column written by David M. Cutler, economics professor at Harvard, J. Bradford Delong, professor of economics at University of California, Berkeley, and Ann Marie Marciarille, adjunct law professor at McGeorge School of law, that was published in the Wall Street Journal estimated that making health care available for everyone would decrease business costs by \$140 billion. The column also claims the reforms would lower health care premiums by \$2,500 and would allow employers to hire 90,000 low wage workers.

It should be noted that Cutler advised President Barack Obama on his campaign trail so critics can argue that his conclusions are effected by his political ideology. But there is no doubt that workers and employers are being negatively effected by the high-costs of health care. If we as a country want to have a healthy economy we will have to reform our health-

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.

Make the speed limit 100 ... kph

With the country concerned with saving gas by increasing mileage, this might be the right time to bring speed limits down to about 62 mph.

But our real crisis is not gas prices, but the state of science education in the United States. Failing to go metric is exacting a big cost on our native production of engineers and physi-

Science is conducted in the metric system. Period. And American students do not speak or think metric.

For instance, how far did you drive today? Perhaps sixteen miles. How many yards is that? How many feet? How many inches? An American student is grabbing for a calculator to multiply by 1760 and 5280 and again by

Meanwhile, foreign students who travel sixteen kilometers can instantly respond to the same problem of smaller units: 16,000 meters, 1,600,000 centimeters and 16 million millimeters. And they never reach for a calculator. This ease of internal conversion among metric units cascades as physics and engineering questions build into more complex units.

We have been crippling our science students for generations. Fortunately, we had a large number of foreign students coming to our college engineering classrooms. Over 90 percent of American degrees in engineering go to foreign-born students. Over half of the engineering faculty in U.S. universities are foreign



John Richard Schrock

 Education Frontlines

However, the standard of living in other countries is improving. As better opportunities "back home" reduce the number who stay in the United States, we are beginning to see a brain drain. Our supply of engineers and physicists has become a national emergency.

While there are many problems with public schools' science education, failure to "go metric" is one that we could solve quickly. And with the price of gasoline making conservation of fuel critical, now is the time to act.

Previous attempts at metric education made three major mistakes.

We should never teach students conversion between metric and nonmetric units. There is no need to learn that there are about 2.2 pounds in a kilogram or an inch is roughly 2.5 centimeters. The advantages of the metric system are within the system. Cross-conversion is unnecessary and only slows student down. Nonmetric units should be dropped completely.

Secondly, many teachers forced students to learn every deci- and deka- and hecta- and milli- and apply each to every unit from meter to gram. But many metric combinations are never used. This over-teaching made earlier attempts at metric conversion complex and burdensome.

Finally, and most important of all, the general population must change to metric use alone for road signs, weather forecasts, everything. In previous attempts to teach the metric system, students left our classrooms to enter a world where gas was still pumped in gallons. We all ignored the bank temperature sign in centigrade and waited until it flashed Fahren-

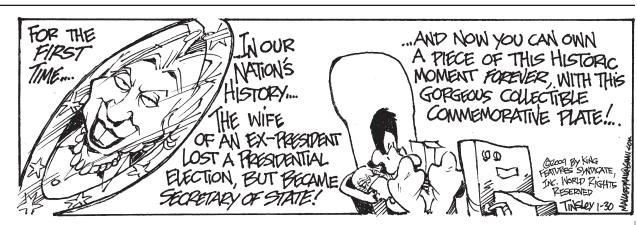
Anyone who has visited a foreign country knows that within a week, you know that "30 degrees" is pretty warm. We can all "think metric" within a couple of weeks when metric is all around us. Canned foods are already labeled in metric. And so is your car speedometer. It is time for us old geezers to get out of the way and stop crippling our next generation of students. America has to start growing more of its own engineers and physicists.

And if the 100 kph is too slow for you, we can make the speed limit 120. In any case, you will be appalled when the traffic policeman says he clocked you going 140!

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley



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