



Free Press
Viewpoint

More handouts
mean higher taxes

Demand is building to force the Kansas Legislature to raise taxes.

Tax money is addictive, and the people who get it want not just what they got last year, but more. As with other drugs, the legislators should just say “no,” but there will be great pressure to get them to say yes.

More than half the state’s money goes for public schools, and the education lobby and teachers’ union are the strongest single force behind state spending. Over the last decade, educators have gone beyond just hounding the Legislature to suing the state.

Some seem to feel spending as much as they want is a basic right, and a power-hungry state Supreme Court backed them in the last legal fight. This resulted in the high court ordering the Legislature to spend more on schools, though that’s a decision most of us thought was reserved for the Legislature, which – unlike the court – is elected by the people.

Nothing is more important to this state than its schools, and given a choice in a normal year, Kansans will back spending on their schools.

This is not a normal year, though. The governor and Legislature have cut nearly every agency, including colleges and universities in dire need of money. They are ready to begin a new round. Estimates show Kansas will be nearly \$260 million short by the end of the year June 30 without more cuts. Even more cuts may be required next year.

Schools were spared all but a fraction of these cuts so far, as they undoubtedly will be the next time. But in this fiscal emergency, they’ll have to take some small share of the pain – and tighten their belts. That’s what Kansas businesses and Kansas taxpayers are doing in this, the worst recession in recent memory.

With jobless rolls soaring and people scraping to pay their bills, who can afford to pay more taxes?

The rich?
Hardly. It’s all of us who will pay if sales or income taxes are raised or so-called “loopholes” closed. All of us who will suffer if business taxes are boosted and more people lose their jobs.

On the other hand, the state has not made any real cuts in its structure. So far, the governor has done across-the-board cuts. No one has looked at state spending and asked, “Do we really need all these agencies? What does this board or that commission do?”

Someone should. This is a perfect time to streamline state government and eliminate not just a few people here and there, but whole agencies. The result would be a leaner, more efficient, more affordable government, a more competitive business climate and citizens with money to spend now and then.

And the state could spend its money on things that really count, like schools and colleges.

Legislators who still want to raise taxes and “save” all the state’s programs might want to vote for a tax increase. We’ll see how they fare come November.

Most voters, and we think, most legislators, will want to take the other path, the one that leads toward less spending and smaller government.

— Steve Haynes

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Hospice workers improve life for families

Other
Opinions

Stacy Parkinson
Kansas’ First Lady

For nearly three decades, Kansas hospice leaders, staff and volunteers have been working to improve the care provided to people during their last days, weeks and months of life.

In recognition of November as National Hospice Month I want to thank hospice for its contribution to improving the quality of life for so many Kansas families.

Many of us have been directly affected by hospice and I am no exception. I have seen and experienced firsthand the inspirational care provided by hospice. While in college, I lost my father to cancer when he was just a couple years older than I am now. Just like many Kansans, I spent a lot of time at the bedside of someone whom I loved dearly, who was nearing the end of life. Years later, when Mark and I operated our elder care facilities, I saw hospice provide ongoing devotion and care to many of our residents. I learned that most hospice workers find this is a calling rather than a job.

In the Sunflower State, we have 70 hospice centers, supported by dedicated nurses, social workers, chaplains, home health aides, medical directors and volunteers. Hospice workers and volunteers uphold a central belief that all people have the right to die with dignity and

that their families should receive the necessary support to assist them. Hospice serves anyone facing a life-limiting illness, regardless of age or illness. Most importantly, hospice workers provide services to individuals in whatever setting they call home. The primary focus of hospice is in keeping the patient comfortable, while promoting dignity and peace of mind.

It’s been 35 years since the first hospice facility was founded in the United States, and since then over 4,700 hospice programs have been established throughout the country. Last year, 1.45 million patients received services from hospice, and 38.5 percent of all U.S. deaths were under the care of a hospice. In addition to providing palliative care and comfort, deaths in hospitals have decreased, and terminally ill hospice patients are likely to live an

average of 29 days longer compared to non-hospice patients.

Yet beyond the statistics, hospice provides so much more. It strives to bring relief of suffering, emotional support, and practical help to those people who are going through the final phase of illness. Hospice takes care of the patient, as well as those whom they love. Whether the patient is at home, in a nursing facility or a hospice facility, hospice is there with an outstretched hand, specialized expertise and genuine compassion.

Losing a loved one is never easy. People deserve to be comfortable, deserve peace of mind, and deserve to be at home – wherever they may call home. Families deserve assurance that their loved ones are safe and secure, that they are receiving quality medical care and that they have the time to find closure.

All of us will know the sorrow which comes with bidding farewell to someone dear. Hospice is one thing that can help ease the journey. I extend my sincerest thanks to everyone who provides hospice care in our state, and I offer my condolences to all who have lost someone. We share the universality of the human experience of grief.

Taiwan proposes cooperation on climate

By STEPHEN SHU-HUNG SHEN

Minister of Environmental Protection
Republic of China (Taiwan)

Climate change caused by human-induced global warming is one of the toughest challenges the world is facing.

Through more than two decades of international cooperation, Taiwan has been successfully introducing advanced policies and technologies into its environmental protection infrastructure. As a result, Taiwan’s environment has significantly improved, the public’s awareness is heightened, and in 2008 carbon dioxide emissions decreased for the first time.

Last year, Taiwan’s total carbon dioxide emission from energy sectors was less than 257 million metric tons, a 4.4 percent decrease compared to the previous year, while the per capita emission dropped 4.8 percent to 11.2 metric tons.

Taiwan’s environmental protection experience is now available to share with other nations. Taiwan intends to work with the international community to combat climate change through bilateral and multilateral cooperation to safeguard both environmental and human health at the national, regional and global levels.

The Taiwan Environmental Protection Administration therefore proposes two international cooperation schemes on climate change mitigation. They are an Overseas Carbon Reduction Cooperation Program and Taiwan’s Initiative: International Cooperation on Efficient Utilization of Global Fossil Fuels and Biomass Energy.

Overseas Carbon Reduction
Cooperation Program

Taiwan’s president, Ma Ying-jeou, considers climate change a top priority of his administration. In 2008, the Taiwan government announced the voluntary carbon dioxide reduction targets: for the period between 2016 and 2020, return to 2008 emission levels; and

by 2050, return to 50 percent of 2000 levels.

Keeping Taiwan’s unique political situation in mind, the Taiwan EPA seeks cooperation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Annex I nations to help Taiwan’s emitting entities meet their reduction requirements and help developing nations cut their carbon emissions with clean development.

The Taiwan EPA will facilitate Taiwan’s emission entities establishing corporations in Annex I nations, and through these overseas corporations’ investment in clean development projects in developing nations that cut carbon emissions under the U.N. guidelines. The carbon credits acquired will then be used to offset emissions in Taiwan. Via cooperation with Annex I and developing nations, Taiwan expects to reach its reduction targets and in the meantime help reduce global emission.

Taiwan’s Initiative: International Cooperation on Efficient Utilization of Global Fossil Fuel and Biomass Energy

To cut the global carbon emission efficiently, Taiwan proposes a global initiative so that the most efficient way of utilizing global fossil and biomass energy can be realized in 40 years through international cooperation. Considering that pure electric vehicles possess the highest energy efficiency – at least four times that of conventional vehicles – and using low-temperature torrefaction to convert biofuel to ecocoal for cogeneration is the most efficient way of harnessing biomass energy, Taiwan would like to present a vision regarding international cooperation on efficient utilization of global fossil fuel and biomass energy for electricity generation and heat supply.

This involves the following: Power plants should be located in the most heat demanding temperate and frigid zones, while the tropical and subtropical zones are supplied by transmitted electricity. Such a design can produce the highest energy efficiency globally. Future fossil fuels and ecocoal produced in the tropi-

cal and subtropical zones are transported to the temperate and frigid zones for cogeneration to provide the world with electricity, including powering electric vehicles.

Through this proposed global cooperation, the most efficient way of energy utilization can be reached.

Future Prospects

In the future, Taiwan’s international cooperation will focus on continuously introducing advanced environmental management and technologies to improve local environmental quality, sharing Taiwan’s experience to help other nations to solve environmental problems, participating in international organizations and environmental guideline-making conferences to follow the international trends to protect the Earth’s environment, and promoting the Overseas Carbon Reduction Cooperation Project and Taiwan’s Initiative: International Cooperation on Efficient Utilization of Global Fossil and Biomass Energy to mitigate climate change.

Taiwan expects that local, regional and global environmental protection tasks will be accelerated through bilateral and multilateral cooperation to safeguard environmental quality, human health and sustainable development.

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