



## Other Viewpoints

# Concealed carry faces new territory

Concealed carry in Kansas isn't going away. That much is certain. About 40,000 Kansans have been licensed by the state to carry a concealed firearm on their person.

Opponents of the Kansas law that began six years ago should ponder that for a moment. A group roughly as large as the population of Salina has been licensed to carry hidden weapons, yet terrible acts of violence or even gun-related accidents by concealed-carry holders, aren't widespread. Granted, you also don't hear much about concealed-carry holders thwarting crime or using a concealed weapon to defend themselves.

Now, however, the concealed-carry program is entering interesting new territory, and it would be wise for lawmakers to pause and complete a thorough review before expanding the program.

Several lawmakers have been pushing to allow concealed-carry permit holders to bring their weapons into public buildings, such as university classrooms, city halls and other such structures if those buildings do not have devices like metal detectors designed to detect illegal weapons.

The Kansas Board of Regents, the League of Kansas Municipalities and others have expressed concerns about the proposal. Lawmakers owe it to their partners in local government to take those concerns seriously. If state lawmakers believe concealed carry in those locations is vital, then their first step should be public education to convince citizens that such a law really will not diminish their safety or cause other problems.

The state's concealed-carry law has been changed several times by lawmakers, often for the worse. Several legislators have expressed surprise about the changes made to the law, and some changes have even caught the Kansas Attorney General's Office unaware. Some examples include:

- Applicants are no longer required to take a shooting test when renewing their license. In addition, a provision allowing the state to deny a renewal based on evidence a person has a physical infirmity that makes it impossible to handle a weapon was removed. Lawmakers have created a situation where applicants can renew their licenses for the next 40 or 50 years without demonstrating they still can safely handle a weapon.
- Permit holders are no longer required to submit to a Breathalyzer test when a police officer suspects the individual is under the influence of alcohol. Previously, permit holders who denied such a request automatically had their licenses suspended for three years. Now, that's no longer the case. It was an irresponsible change that makes the job of law enforcement more difficult.
- Several offenses that prohibited a person from receiving a concealed-carry license have been removed, including: people with two misdemeanor DUI convictions in the past five years, people with misdemeanor drug convictions, people convicted of carrying under the influence in another state and individuals who have been declared in contempt of court for child support proceedings.

If lawmakers want to expand the state's concealed-carry law, it seems they first should do a better job of explaining the rationale of some of the changes they've already made.

— *The Lawrence Journal-World, via the Associated Press*

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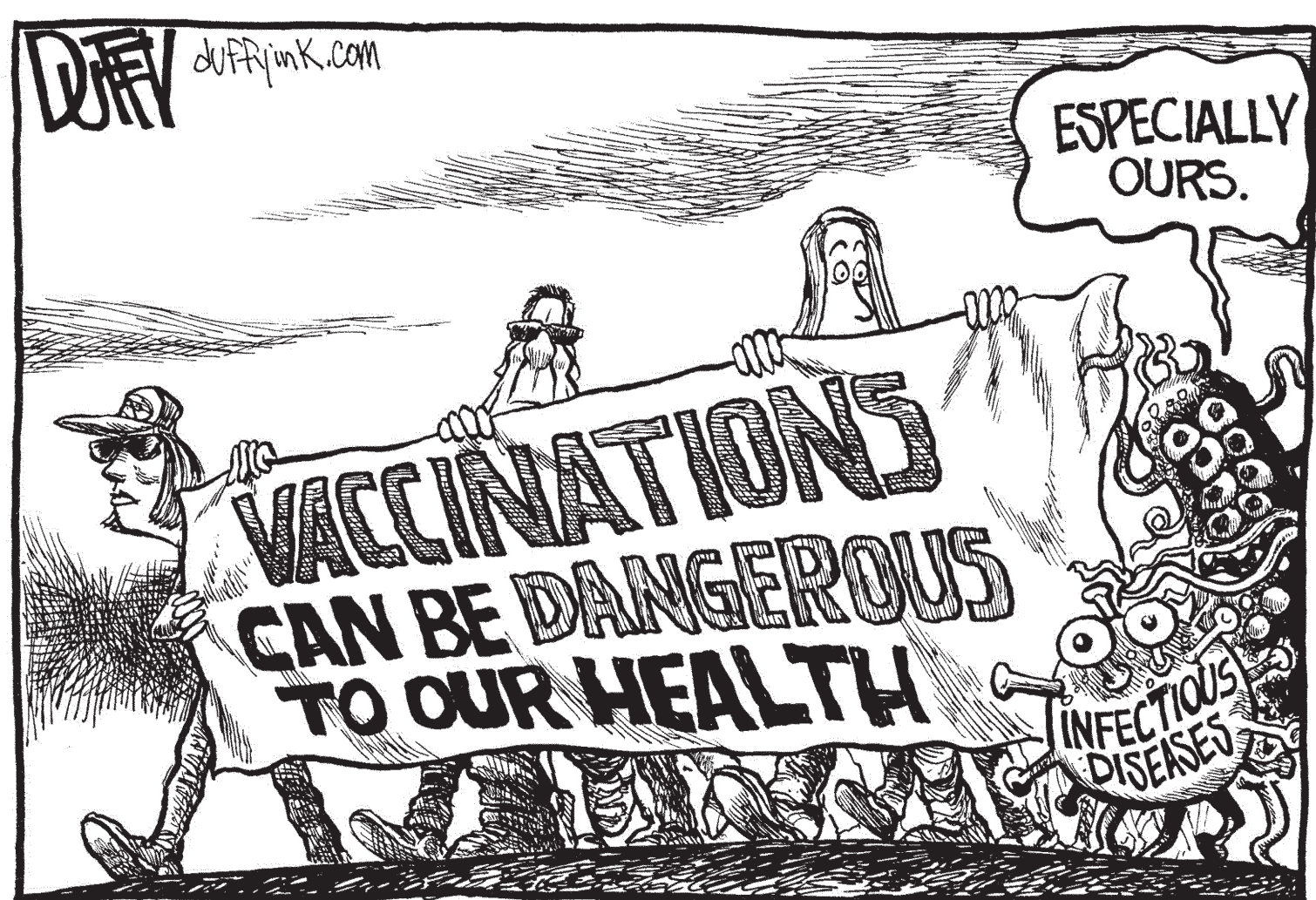
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# Watch out when assigning labels

A recent article in *Newsweek* by Tina Brown touched on the alleged similarities between the inner workings of Nazi Germany and Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. International.

Brown, editor and chief of *Newsweek*, as well as *The Daily Beast*, a news reporting and opinion website, wrote that Murdoch, like Adolf Hitler, fostered a culture that created yes men capable of fulfilling the "boss's practical and psychic needs."

"Ian Kershaw, the historian of the Third Reich, has brilliantly described this syndrome as 'working towards the Fuhrer,'" Brown wrote. "In Nazi Germany, he argues, officials usually took the initiative in launching policies to meet Hitler's perceived wishes or turned into policy Hitler's often garbled desires."

"That's how it works inside Rupert Murdoch's News International. Reporters and editors don't have to be told to spin a story — nor do they have to be told to wiretap a phone or bribe a cop or hack an e-mail to get it."

Although I'm not a fan of Murdoch or his ethically-challenged news empire, comparing him to Hitler is over the top. Although Brown was only comparing one personality trait the two men supposedly shared, many readers will interpret the article to mean Murdoch-owned businesses are the moral equivalent of Nazi Germany.



**Andy Heintz**

- Wildcat Ramblings

Relying on the public to discern the difference between the consequences of unscrupulous, shady business practices and the far greater consequences of mythical racial superiority and mass murder comes with too great a risk. Our politics are poisoned enough by a culture that encourages government officials and media figures to play to people's base instincts. There is no need to throw another log on that fire.

For whatever reason, politics tends to bring out people's ugly side. Instead of accepting the fact that some people are bound to disagree with our perception of the world, we turn our adversaries into sadistic monsters whose evil goals rival the atrocities committed by history's most depraved human beings. And few human beings were more depraved than Hitler.

So it's no surprise that Hitler's name is used when someone is being vilified for their sinful,

or at least what some deem to be sinful, behavior. The Bush-as-Hitler and Obama-as-Hitler comparisons made by Democrat and Republican partisans serve as perfect examples of this disturbing practice. The fact that this kind of rhetoric isn't confined to one political party doesn't lessen its toxic affect on political discourse.

We should never forget that the immoral behavior of certain corporate figures pales in comparison to the human misery wrought by Hitler's Nazi Germany. The Nazis killed six million Jews. Rupert Murdoch may be a shady character, but he has never killed anyone.

While Brown's comparison may be correct — there may be some similarities between Hitler and Murdoch — she should have found another way to shine a light on the media mogul's allegedly corrupt business style.

Given the enormity of Hitler's crimes, he should be compared only to world leaders that rival him in evil acts: Joseph Stalin, Pol Pot, Kim Jong Il and Mao Zedong. There are plenty of effective ways to criticize the shameless actions of the morally bankrupt without playing the Hitler card.

*Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.*

# 'Alternative' teacher prep not for Kansas

Kansas got a low score in the national report on teacher preparation by the National Council on Teacher Quality released in January.

Unfortunately, this shallow survey is driven by ideology, not statistics. The state ranked higher than 43 other states on teacher education and student performance criteria, but that is ignored. Kansas is given a poor grade because of a National Council obsession: we do not let alternate teacher preparation run wild.

"Alternate route" programs let people who aspire to be teachers gain training through routes other than standard university coursework. To make the Council on Teacher Quality happy, Kansas should throw open the doors to any mail-order outfit that claims to turn out teachers.

The darling of alternate routes is Teach for America. Established in 1990, this program recruits high-achieving college graduates in a Peace-Corp fashion to teach for two years in low-income urban and rural schools. Similar to Peace Corps volunteers, these idealistic students serve only for two or three years and then move on to other vocations. Fewer than 15 percent remain in the high-need classrooms for five years.

There is no doubt that Teach for America recruits are both strong in academics and also motivated. But the fact that most move on to other fields after their two-year commitment, often into law or medicine, causes dramatic turnover in schools. And the total numbers, 7,300 currently nationwide and building to perhaps 13,000 in five years, are trivial.

Behind the Council on Teacher Quality's bad attitude is their belief that education school coursework is not needed. The Teach for America teachers only get five weeks of preparation to become teachers. And yes, it is difficult to defend education school programs when they change their philosophy from cooperative teaching one day to outcomes-based education



**John Richard Schrock**

- Education Frontlines

the next. But students in face-to-face campus programs at Kansas universities get a lot more useful training to become teachers that is not provided in alternate route programs.

The Council on Teacher Quality is also unhappy that Kansas limits alternate route programs to high-need secondary areas (there is a glut of elementary teachers, etc.)

The methods and the products of Kansas "alt route" programs vary widely. Face-to-face on-campus programs provide professors with important experience with students that helps them determine if they are teacher material. University programs serve a "gatekeeper" role that online alternate route programs cannot.

But some universities and colleges across Kansas are training alternate route teachers outside of their on-campus programs. Superintendents and principals who have hired "alt route" teachers know that while there are some that can fill the vacancy, there are more who are not performing well compared to regular route teachers.

In the current rush to expand enrollments and forfeit quality, some Kansas programs are now turning out "alt route" teachers using all-online correspondence courses. These programs cannot attest to the candidate teacher's honesty, attitude, work ethic or enthusiasm for teaching.

Following the "alt route" model, one state university trains regular elementary teachers completely online and has asked to train "alt route" teachers in fields where it does not even have campus programs — and therefore would

have no faculty to provide supervision!

Much to their credit, both the University of Kansas and Kansas State University decided not to offer "alt route" teacher education programs. It is no more valid to train teachers online than it is to train medical doctors online. Indeed, the ongoing interpersonal skills needed in teaching are far greater than in medicine.

In a state that has lost over 1,800 licensed positions in the last two years, we have new student teachers going jobless. It is time to shut down Kansas alternate route programs. Kansas does not need a national council to tell us what teacher quality is all about.

*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.*

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## Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley



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