

## Other Viewpoints

### Immigrant tuition should be retained

A call for repeal of the policy that allows public universities in Kansas to change the children of illegal immigrants' in-state tuition rates has surfaced yet again. The call should go unanswered, again.

Yes, illegal is illegal, and everyone knows what that means. That includes members of Congress, who know what illegal means but seldom show concern about immigration reform.

Calls for immigration reform were numerous even before Kansas adopted the policy to allow children of illegal immigrants to attend state universities at in-state tuition rates. But Congress offered nothing but talk.

Many Democratic office holders at the federal level haven't wanted to get tough on illegal immigration because it could cost them votes among the fastest-growing voting block in the country, citizens of Hispanic descent. Democrats can count being well-received at the voting booths by that voting block, although Republicans have plans to make inroads.

Many Republican office holders haven't wanted to get tough on illegal immigration because supporters – the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, many state chambers of commerce and some businesses – don't want to get tough on immigration.

Given that the federal government, tasked with handling immigration, has shown so little interest, why should we pick on the children of illegal immigrants who want an education so they can get good jobs, contribute to society and pay taxes?

It would be different if the federal government was actively taking steps to round up large numbers of illegal immigrants – estimated at 11 million – and send them to their home countries, but that's not the case. Therefore, Congress passing a federal law prohibiting universities from charging in-state tuition to children of undocumented residents if the same benefit isn't extended to all U.S. citizens bordered on hypocrisy.

What isn't hypocritical is Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach suggesting the Legislature pass a law denying public services to aliens and repeal its in-state tuition policy. Kobach has done all he can in fighting illegal immigration. When he talks about the issue, he is being true to his colors.

But at the national level, many Republicans are rethinking their stance and entertaining the idea of a "pathway" to citizenship for illegal immigrants now in the U.S. How far that will get is yet to be determined but the party nationally is serious about increasing its appeal among the Hispanic voting bloc.

Here in Kansas, some organizations want to make it easier to hire illegal immigrants, and businesses protest at suggestions they should be penalized for hiring undocumented workers.

So if work is available for illegal immigrants who are parents and there are so few who want to do anything to change that, why punish their children by making them pay out-of-state tuition? And given the high and ever-rising cost of earning a college diploma, the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition should be considered punishment. It definitely would be a hindrance to furthering their education.

Immigrant children brought here by their parents are not guilty of the sins of their mothers and fathers. If they can show they have been living in Kansas long enough to be considered state residents, disregarding their parents' legal status, they should be allowed to attend Kansas' public universities at the in-state tuition rate.

– *The Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press*



### 'Land of opportunity' marketed in 1905

Nowhere on earth can you invest your money more safely or profitably than western Kansas. That was the marketing pitch back in 1905 from Wise & Stern, dealers in farms, grazing lands and stock ranches.

Wise & Stern, located at 806 Grand Ave. in Kansas City, Mo., had already been selling land in western Kansas for several years; in addition to making money, this company was convinced western Kansas was the new heaven on earth and destined for greatness. Crops that year were excellent and a feeling of prosperity prevailed across the western third to half of Kansas. Reports of wheat yields of more than 25 bushels per acre in the region of Lane, Finney, Kearney, Wichita, Greeley, Hamilton and Scott counties were heralded as average, with many farmers reporting even "better" yields. Wheat sold for a whopping 80 cents per bushel.

A decided change for the better in rainfall during those few years steamrolled the excitement among those like Wise & Stern, who marketed a 28-page pamphlet touting western Kansas as the land of opportunity. They also provided rail trips to show off their holdings to anyone wishing to invest in land.

"The breaking up and cultivating of these prairies south of western Kansas (in Oklahoma and Texas) has changed these prairies and has changed these winds to more moisture-laden breezes, so that there is an appreciable increase in the rainfall on the plains of western Kansas over the average of 10 years ago," according to Wise & Stern's pamphlet.

According to a story in the *Kansas City Journal*, a western Kansan was quoted as saying, "We have found out how to farm western



**John Schlageck**

• Insights  
Kansas Farm Bureau

Kansas now and the rainfall has changed. It used to rain all at once, and then stay dry.... Now we have gentle, soaking rains all over western Kansas. Cloudbursts and floods no longer trouble us."

Blessed with well-watered, fertile soil – rich, black loam ranging from two to four feet deep and a "mild" climate with short winters, cool nights in the summer and almost always a gentle breeze, western Kansas was touted as "God's Country" at the beginning of the 20th century.

During the nine-year period between 1897 and 1905, it averaged more than 20 inches of rainfall per year in Finney County, according to B.F. Stocks, a local observer for the U.S. Weather Bureau. Such a rosy rainfall record provided even more reason to invest in western-Kansas land.

Another attribute that boded well for buying farm and ranch land in western Kansas 108 years ago was the cheap price.

Land in this region of Kansas could be purchased from \$2.50 to \$15 per acre. Individuals interested in buying land were encouraged to look around at the rich farmer neighbors from Illinois, Indiana and Iowa. They all became wealthy because they bought land when it was cheap, so the sales pitch went.

"The same opportunity is open to you, providing you choose to take advantage of it," according to Wise & Stern. "This is probably your last opportunity for good, smooth and productive lands at \$3 to \$15 an acre."

Yes, western Kansas was indeed the Promised Land back in 1905. Visions of this rich, smooth, fertile prairie becoming the breadbasket of the world were being heralded throughout the land.

Fields producing 20 to 45 bushels per acre with a test weight of 60 to 66 pounds per bushel were seen as commonplace, with never a thought given to extended periods of drought, blowing winds and soil. More than 100 years ago, western Kansas was indeed the new, undeveloped region where opportunities and advantages were limitless.

Examples of production costs including interest and taxes – but no mention of labor, toil and trial – totaled \$874 to put in a wheat crop and harvest it on 160 acres. With a yield of 20 bushels per acre, at 60 cents per bushel, a farmer could gross \$1,920. Net profit on 160 acres for one year and one wheat crop totaled \$1,046. Quite a return back in 1905.

This formula for success was sound. No need for argument. All that was required was for the farmer to till the soil properly and the elements would do the rest. However, no man should expect nature to do it all.

Welcome to the land of opportunity.

*John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.*

### Ferrets mean prairie dog 'infestations'

To the Editor:

I am writing concerning an initiative which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is trying to put in place through the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service governing future attempts to reintroduce an endangered species, the black-footed ferret.

With this initiative, these agencies plan to compensate landowners to "conserve" prairie dogs on their properties or in other words, they are planning to pay landowners to maintain prairie dog infestations. The plan states that no lethal control will occur on the conservation (infestation) areas.

The control will be done on what they have termed the "management area," or in other words, on the land of neighbors where damage has already been done. In Logan County, the only Kansas site where these animals have been released, the Fish and Wildlife Service has attempted to control prairie dogs for three miles out and that has not worked, yet this plan will control less than 1/8 of a mile around infestations.

If this agency is not stopped, they will issue themselves a 50-year permit for the entire area that makes up the historic range of the prairie dog. That area encompasses most of 12 state and consists of an estimated billion acres. In exchange for compensating landowners for leaving prairie dog infestations on their land, the landowners have to agree to let the service release black-footed ferrets on the infested areas for 10 to 40 years.

Within the plan, they admit that plague – which prairie dogs can carry – is now present



#### Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

in all 12 states and they will just deal with it as it develops. Additionally, as Logan County has found, with prairie dog infestations come rattlesnakes. An 8-year-old boy was nearly lost to a rattlesnake bite a little over a year ago on land which abuts the area known as the Haverfield Complex. Not to mention the enormous economic impact that comes with the prairie dog infestations due to the repeated treatment costs and loss of grazing and crops to burrowing and clipping done by these rodents.

The Fish and Wildlife Service says it will address dispersal of prairie dogs with structural and vegetative barriers, both of which have been proven ineffective in Logan County.

Yet, the Draft Black-footed Ferret Safe Harbor Agreement states, "At one reintroduction site in Kansas, management of prairie dogs by wildlife services at the property boundary, to minimize the expansion of prairie dog colonies onto adjacent properties, has addressed this issue." This is an unmitigated misstatement of the facts.

The document states that the "conservation areas," which are to be a minimum of 1,500

acres, can comprise tracts of two or more "adjacent" landowners in order to attain the desired size. When they say "adjacent," by their definition, it does not mean the properties share a common border; it means they are near each other.

The comment period on this initiative ends next Friday, Feb. 22. If you would like to read any of the documents associated with the plan, they can be found at: [www.blackfootedferret.org/landowner-incentives-program/usfws-regulatory-assurances/safe-harbor-2](http://www.blackfootedferret.org/landowner-incentives-program/usfws-regulatory-assurances/safe-harbor-2). This plan will have disastrous effects for landowners in any area unfortunate enough to be chosen for a "conservation" area.

If you would like to comment, you can submit comments by e-mail to [FerretSHA@fws.gov](mailto:FerretSHA@fws.gov), by fax to (970) 897-2732, or by U.S. mail to Kimberly Tamkun, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center, Box 190, Wellington, Colo., 80549-0190.

Sheila Ellis, Scott City landowner in Scott and Logan counties

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail [colby.editor@nwks.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwks.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.



**COLBY FREE PRESS**  
 155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
 Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: [colby.editor@nwks.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwks.com)  
 State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

**Sharon Friedlander - Publisher**  
[sfriedlander@nwks.com](mailto:sfriedlander@nwks.com)

**NEWS**

**Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter**  
[colby.sports@nwks.com](mailto:colby.sports@nwks.com)

**Marian Ballard - Copy Editor**  
[mballard@nwks.com](mailto:mballard@nwks.com)

**Sam Dieter - News Reporter**  
[colby.editor@nwks.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwks.com)

**ADVERTISING**  
[colby.ads@nwks.com](mailto:colby.ads@nwks.com)

**Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative**  
[kb Ballard@nwks.com](mailto:kb Ballard@nwks.com)

**Janene Woodall - Advertising Representative**  
[jwoodall@nwks.com](mailto:jwoodall@nwks.com)

**Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design**  
[khunter@nwks.com](mailto:khunter@nwks.com)

**BUSINESS OFFICE**  
 Office Manager

**Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager**  
[medmondson@nwks.com](mailto:medmondson@nwks.com)

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
[support@nwks.com](mailto:support@nwks.com)

**NOR'WEST PRESS**

**Richard Westfahl - General Manager**  
 Gary Stewart, Foreman  
 Jim Jackson, Jim Bowker, Pressmen  
 Kris McCool, Judy McKnight, Tracy Traxel,  
 Sheri Arroyo, Mailing

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

