

Other Viewpoints

Drug testing law a reasonable rule

Opponents of a new law that allows drug testing of Kansans who receive cash assistance or unemployment benefits contend the measure is punitive, designed to harm the poor and needy.

But assigning such a motive to every legislator in the Kansas House and Senate who voted for the drug-testing bill, signed last week by Gov. Sam Brownback, is a stretch, and unfair. The state has legitimate reasons for trying to ensure the money it transfers to people through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program operated by the Kansas Department for Children and Families is used for its intended purpose, and that isn't to purchase illegal drugs or use prescription drugs illegally.

The law places no burden on those receiving cash assistance that most Kansans don't encounter when they apply for a job.

Most employers across the state require job applicants to pass a pre-employment drug test. Many of them also have written policies that allow them to further test employees at random or for cause. A lot of companies also require employees who file workers compensation claims to take a drug test.

Those tests aren't punitive, they are just sound business practices.

Just as employers have a vested interest in knowing their employees aren't under the influence of illegal drugs or controlled substances when they report to work each day, the state has a vested interest in knowing the people they are trying to help aren't using drugs illegally.

Any Temporary Assistance recipient who is using drugs wouldn't be able to pass a pre-employment test or secure a job that would eliminate the need for public assistance.

Under the law, which also applies to those collecting unemployment benefits, testing will begin Jan. 1 and anyone who fails a drug test will be required to complete a substance abuse treatment program and a job skills course. Anyone failing a second drug test will lose cash or unemployment benefits for 12 months and will be required to complete another treatment and job skills program. A third failed test would result in a permanent loss of benefits.

In cases that involve families, children will continue to receive benefits if a parent or guardian fails a drug test, although the child's benefits would be handled by a drug-free third party. Refusing to punish children for the lapses of their parents is an essential part of the law.

State officials say testing will occur whenever there is reasonable suspicion someone is using a controlled substance. A legislator who championed the bill estimates that about 8 percent of Temporary Assistance participants will be tested, based on results of a preliminary assessment administered to applicants.

That doesn't sound like a witch hunt, and the state has an obvious interest in ensuring those receiving temporary help are able to seek and find employment.

— *The Topeka Capital Journal, via the Associated Press*

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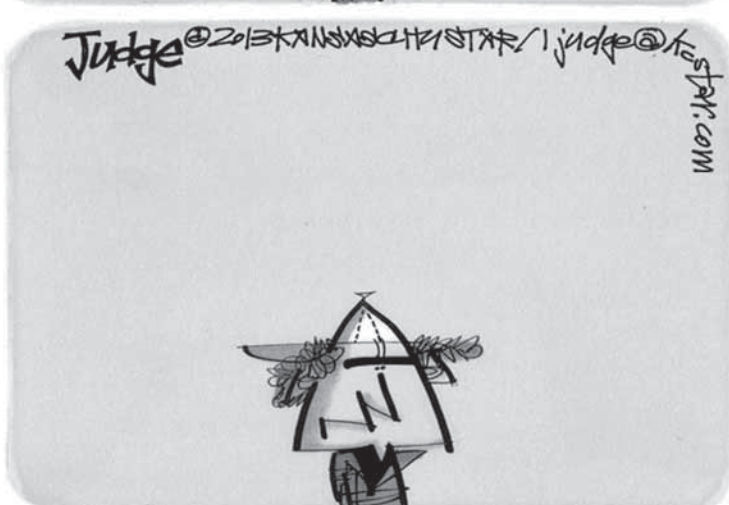
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Family that eats together stays together

When we think of eating a meal today, images of a person dashing toward the door while chomping down the last bite and yelling good-bye are all too common. But again, that is only part of the story.

While some folks have sounded the demise of the family meal, eating together at the dinner table may not become extinct. Plenty of families still take the time to eat together four or five times a week despite the distractions of work schedules and after-school activities.

Preparing dinner and eating together as a family is important. Having dinner together has been a tradition with many families for generations. It has always been considered a valuable way to keep families together. It's one way busy parents can communicate with busy children.

In the helter-skelter world of the 21st century, when family members are moving in different directions, it's more important than ever to make the most of family mealtimes. Doing so calls for planning and implementation.

One of the first things to do is to turn off the television, put down the smart phones and turn off the computers. Sitting down together to share a meal is a great way for family members to share news and engage in conversation.



John Schlageck

• Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

Turning off distracting electronic devices will make it easier for the family to talk and listen to one another.

Look forward to dinner. Having meals together can be a happy memory most people carry from childhood. Time spent with the family around the dinner table can help keep the family intact.

Set a specific time. While many cultures eat their large family meal at midday, Americans typically eat the evening meal together. No matter which meal your family eats together, try to schedule it at the same time each day. That way all family members can plan for the meal in advance.

It is important to assign everyone a job. One person should never be responsible for all the meal preparations and cleanup. Assigning each family member a job can make this a true

tradition.

Historically, the family meal has been a way to honor those who work both inside and outside the home. Make sure to honor all family members by assigning each his or her own spot at the table, and sit in the same seats each night.

Give special honor to the cook who prepared the meal by complimenting the food and presentation.

Another way to make the evening meal rich with tradition is to develop a unique way to call everyone to the table. Consider a dinner bell to call children in from outside. Letting the family know that dinner is ready may also be a specific assignment. Avoid yelling.

Finally, hand this mealtime tradition down to the next generation. Rituals often evolve over the history of a family. Meal traditions you establish now may last long into the future.

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.

Republicans: take charge of spending

Every evening as I watch the news, I hear the Democrats blasted for their irresponsible, wasteful spending leading this nation to its highest national debt with over \$6 trillion accredited to President Barack Obama alone.

Secretary of State John Kerry gave the Palestinians some \$500 million not to attack Israel. Last month, Egypt reportedly received 16 F-16 fighter jets together with some 400 tanks; their likely target? Israel, our supposed friend. Every year we give them \$1.7 billion in foreign aid. All this while we close down White House tours allegedly because we do not have the money to keep them open.

We presently spend (waste) about \$20 billion a year on "buying" friends, called foreign aid. The spending goes on and on with Democrats, according to the news, responsible for most of it.

So, if true, why attack the Republican Party? They are not in charge, Democrats are. That was so for Obama's first two years in power, but decidedly not so since 2010. When Republicans retook the House of Representatives and Nancy Pelosi handed the gavel to John Boehner, Republicans assumed the major responsibility of this Congressional body — taxing and spending.

The Constitution reads, "All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives, but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills" (Article I, Section 7, Clause 1). Neither the Senate nor the White House can initiate taxes.

All the Republican-controlled House has to do to stop irresponsible spending is to not originate the bill to cover the expenses. The annual House Budget could leave out items formerly approved. Deficit spending could end simply by their refusal to pass new deficit spending bills.

It is true that the President has not had a budget, although required by law, in over four years, and he was about two months late in

Other Opinions

• **Harold Pease**
Liberty Under Fire

proposing one this year as well. Until such time as one is processed constitutionally, the House budget should be the official federal budget.

It is also true that no tax law can originate from the House of Representatives. Hence only the House Budget really matters. If a president spends money not first approved by this body he is, in effect, raising revenue, a power that he does not possess, and both parties should share in his condemnation.

Sole power of impeachment also originates from the House, and a president perpetually attempting to usurp from the House its sole power to raise revenue might be reminded of the second power. Also, given that a president's salary is also a budget item, the House might explore the possibility of not raising revenue for this purpose should this body feel threatened by a president's usurpation of its power. This procedure was openly used by state legislatures on zealous royal governors to help bring them into line during colonial American history.

Why do the House of Representatives alone have this power? The power of the purse (both taxing and spending) is one of the most important powers of the Constitution. The Founders resolved that it should be left with the representatives of the people, thus making it impossible for the people to be over-taxed without their consent for more than two years, as all members of this body come up for

reelection on the same date.

To my knowledge, no other people in history have had control over their taxes. It is a priceless freedom.

Addressing this subject, James Madison observed, "This power over the purse may, in fact, be regarded as the most complete and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure."

The U.S. Constitution requires that "the House of Representatives cannot only refuse, but they alone can propose the supplies requisite for the support of government." This power alone he added, "can overcome all the overgrown prerogatives of the other branches of the government. They, in a word, hold the purse... (The Federalist, No. 58)."

So Republicans, if you do not like the above reckless spending charge that I have attributed to you, assume your constitutional duty to protect the people from such and do so immediately. You are in charge in this matter, not they. Your failure to act weakens this part of the Constitution. Mankind waited almost 6,000 years to have freedom from excessive taxation. You do not have the right to lose it for posterity.

Dr. Harold Pease has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying that knowledge to current events. He has taught history and political science from this perspective for over 25 years at Taft College. To read more of his weekly articles, go to www.LibertyUnderFire.org.

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Mallard Fillmore

• **Bruce Tinsley**

