



Other Viewpoints

Ignition interlock a state law to keep

It's always disappointing when legislators resist attempts to enact laws intended to keep people safe.

Often, such dissenters argue government shouldn't overstep its bounds in requiring certain safety-minded acts, when the opposite is true. Governments do indeed have an obligation to pursue policies that discourage dangerous behavior.

With that in mind, it was encouraging to see a law enacted in 2011 in Kansas contribute to a decline in alcohol-related fatalities.

Statistics from the Kansas Department of Transportation show alcohol-related traffic deaths dropping sharply after Kansas joined other states with all-offender ignition interlock legislation.

The law requires all Kansans convicted of drunken driving to install ignition interlock systems. Vehicles won't start if the interlock machines detect alcohol on the breath of the driver.

Since passage of the new law, the number of drunken-driving deaths in Kansas dropped by more than 30 percent, from 138 in 2010 to 94 in 2012.

Before 2011, the Sunflower State reportedly had an average of 116 alcohol-related traffic fatalities between 2000 and 2010. The nation saw alcohol-related fatalities drop during that time, but not Kansas.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving helped push for the first-time offender ignition interlock law in Kansas. They pointed to other states that saw fewer alcohol-related crashes, injuries and fatalities after enacting mandatory interlocks for all offenders.

While pursuing a proven way to reduce the number of repeat offenders who endanger themselves and others made sense, there's still work to do.

One misstep moving forward would be in a failure of the Kansas Legislature to maintain the interlock requirement.

A 2015 sunset clause was built into the law. If the clause isn't removed by state lawmakers, ignition interlocks would no longer be required for all offenders who choose to drive drunk.

Statistics that show a downward trend in alcohol-related accidents and deaths should lead the Legislature in the next session to eliminate the sunset clause of a law that works and helps save lives.

That's not overreach. It's the responsible thing to do.

— The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press

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

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

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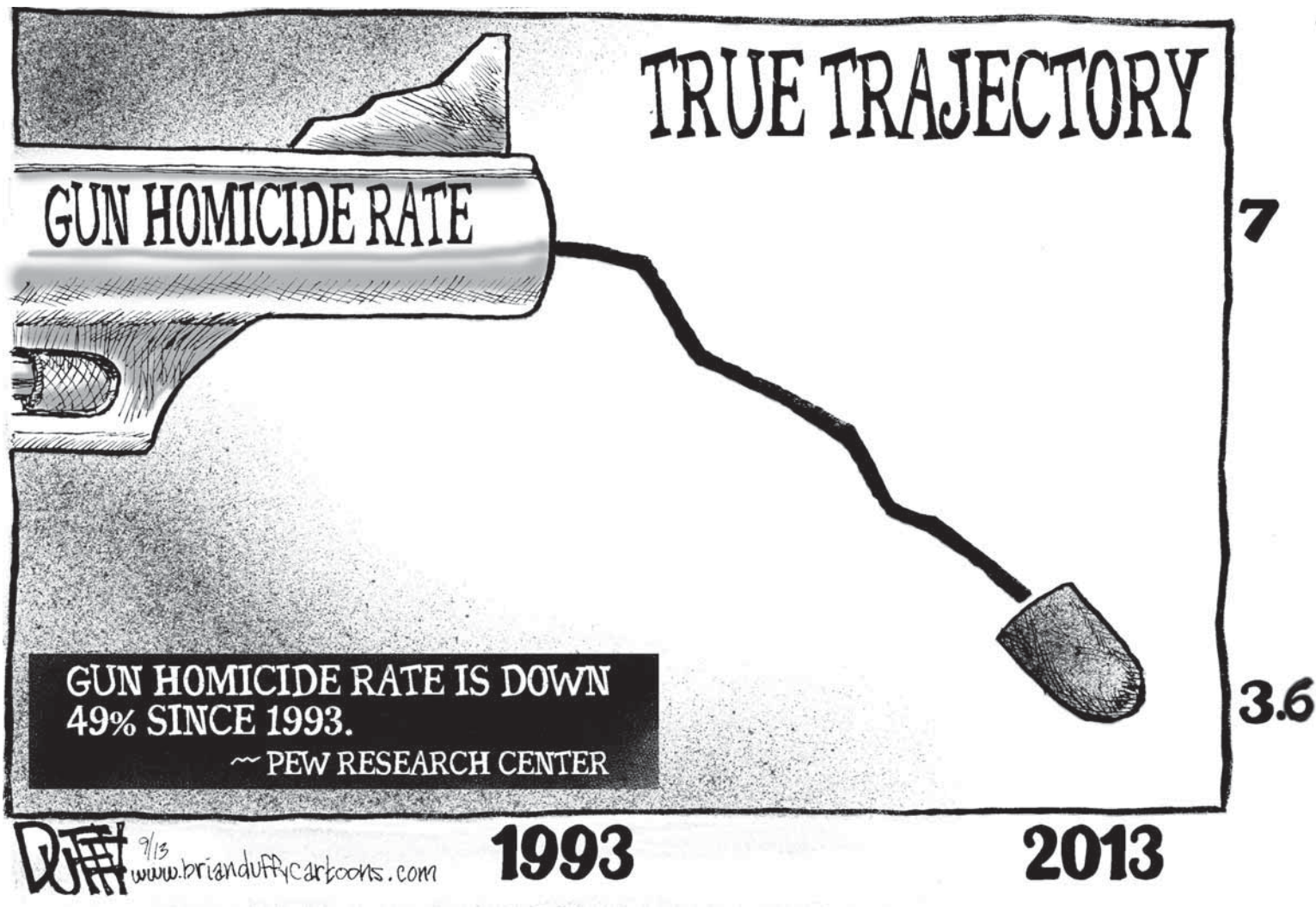
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W.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



Make farm bill top priority

Talk to anyone in farm country and next to concerns about the need for more rain, the farm bill remains at the top of the list of things Congress must do before the end of the year.

Unfortunately, the farm bill doesn't seem to be a priority in our nation's capital. At the present time Congress is mired firmly in the matter of whether we use military action in Syria.

With every passing day, the likelihood of a farm bill extension increases. The current extension of 2008 farm program authority expires Sept. 30.

The fly in the ointment has become the continued debate over whether the bill must include nutrition programs and the formation of a conference committee to work out differences between the Senate and House versions of the proposed bills.

Kansas Sen. Pat Roberts told a full house at the Farm Bureau leadership breakfast during last week's State Fair the farm bill debate is a perfect storm.

"The Senate won't pass a farm bill without what they consider to be an appropriate food stamp program," he said.

Roberts promised to do what he can to protect, preserve and strengthen crop insurance and to stop using it as a bank for other programs.



John Schlageck

• Insights
Kansas Farm Bureau

Allowing the current extension to expire is not an option, he added. This would leave the 1949 farm bill to fill the void. If that happens, farmers and consumers will be in trouble because programs from conservation to research will disappear.

Policy reforms, such as a larger role for crop insurance as part of the farm safety net, more equity across crops and increased support for fruit and vegetable growers, will not be possible if the current farm bill is not extended.

In addition, some commodity prices could soar because they would be tied to farm productivity from the 1940s. Milk, as an example, could double or triple at the supermarket.

"I don't want to go back down the road where farmers plant for the government rather than planning for the market," Kansas' senior senator said.

A new farm bill will provide farmers the certainty they need to plan their crops and obtain

financing. This is the number one reason a new farm bill must be hammered out in Washington. Another extension will not do so.

Additionally, a new farm bill provides stability to an industry buffeted by volatile weather conditions, erratic world commodity prices and international trade scenarios that cause spikes and valleys in world food markets.

It also helps ensure this nation's domestic food supply. Every U.S. citizen benefits from quality, affordable food.

Consumers understand deep in the pocket what it feels like to be dependent on oil from the Middle East. The farm bill ensures Americans can depend on American farmers to feed them.

Since World War II, nearly all nations help their farmers in one way or another. The United States does so with its farm bill.

"We need a bill, we'll get a bill, rest assured, with your help we'll live to fight another day," Roberts said. "We'll try to make this farm bill more market oriented as we go down the road."

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.

Celebrate Constitution Week – read it

This is Constitution Week and as such it is well to remind our governments and elected officials, all of whom have sworn to abide by it, to reread and follow it. It is also well for us to do the same so we can identify those who would take away our liberty and remove these dangerous people from their places of power.

Look around. Our president spies on us through the National Security Administration in disregard of the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution and uses the Internal Revenue Service to intimidate and harass his political opposition, most notably conservative, religious and Tea Party groups.

Moreover, he upends existing law, as in 2012 when by executive order he refused to continue enforcing the deportation of a class of illegal emigrants. Or, in healthcare, some get a year to implement while others do not and Congress gets exempted. Today his branch, including his over 30 unconstitutionally appointed czars, makes far more rules on us than does our elected Congress. But he wants to take this nation into a totally unconstitutional war with Syria.

Look around. Congress seems inept at best, unable or unwilling to investigate and bring to justice those in the government who allowed some 2,000 guns to go to the Mexican drug cartels who used these in some of the murders of over 70,000 Mexicans and our own border patrol Agent Brian Terry. They are unwilling or unable to investigate the four deaths of Americans in Benghazi, a scandal now a year old. Unwilling or unable to investigate, stop and punish IRS agents using their positions to silence political opposition. Unwilling or unable to investigate, stop and punish NSA spying and storing all electronic information on all Americans. Why? Because most in Congress are party lap dogs justifying or condemning on party lines instead of the Constitution.

As the president absorbs Congress' law-

Other Opinions

• Harold Pease
Liberty Under Fire

making powers, making Congress more irrelevant each day, they pretend all is well. While not guarding their own powers from an encroaching executive branch, they trample the rights of the states where all power not listed in the Constitution belongs. They have mocked the 10th Amendment and have been complacent in the demise of the first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth and ninth amendments as well. There are a few members of Congress who do put the Constitution in front of party and career, such as Rand Paul, Mike Lee and Ted Cruz, but they are far too few.

Look around. The Supreme Court no longer uses the Constitution, as understood by the Founding Fathers, as important. Past practice has replaced original intent and natural law as first consideration. Even international law has come to have more value than original intent in their rendered decisions. The court makes new law, a constitutional function of Congress alone, by ruling on an issue in such a way as to give it new meaning, thus new law. It is called judicial legislation. The laws of the land have been changed by dozens of such rulings the last 50 years.

Healthcare comes to mind. Congress never passed it as a tax and the political party passing it and their president emphatically resisted any description of it as such. Nevertheless, Justice John Roberts ruled it to be a tax then argued that Congress can tax, making it constitutional. The court omitted the fact that the

word health (or anything remotely similar) is nowhere in the Constitution and is therefore entirely a state issue, as per Amendment 10, until an Amendment ratified by three-fourths of the state legislatures moves health to the limited list in the Constitution. Healthcare by any previous combination of justices would have been 100 percent unconstitutional with or without the tax issue.

When the Supreme Court no longer protects the Constitution it falls upon the states to do so, defending the 10th Amendment and using the Doctrine of Nullification (understood and endorsed by the Founders) and previously used in 1798, 1832 and 1852. It is so poorly understood today that few can defend it; nevertheless it was and is the final check on an over-reaching federal government.

When reading the Constitution this happy Constitution Week, 226 years since its origin, please pay special attention to the list provided to each of these branches of the federal government. The concept of a list is so vital to our interpretation of the Constitution. If they were to do as they pleased no list would be needed.

Dr. Harold Pease has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers. He teaches at Taft College. To read more of his weekly articles, go to www.LibertyUnderFire.org.

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roberts.senate.gov/public/

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

