

from other pens...

Presidential primary, should we have one?

Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburg and others want the state to have a presidential primary.

A lot of things have to change. A lot of things. For starters, voters must want one. Kansas primaries in 2000 and 2004 were both canceled to save money — and there just was not the interest. A primary is estimated at \$2 million.

At the Western Governors Association annual meeting in 2004, members approved a resolution to create a committee to develop a presidential primary among its member states in 2008. Kansas is one of those 18 member states.

Even if Kansas has enough money and interest a year from now to hold a primary, don't count on the state to get the attention or results to make a difference.

In fact, it may be forgotten by the association and the rest of the country.

Kansas Sen. Sam Brownback has already said he will run for president in 2008, which may sound like Kansas will get the attention. But look what he is up against already.

Arizona Sen. John McCain told late-night television talk show host David Letterman this week he will run for president. McCain plans on making a more formal announcement in the near future.

McCain has received much more attention in the political realm than Brownback because of his history. Brownback's traditional conservative values will also be challenged. Don't be surprised if Brownback is forgotten because of that. Many mainstream national media outlets do little, if any, for traditional conservative values. Don't expect Brownback's campaign to help Kansas.

But what really counts for a presidential election is something Kansas may never have enough of to be a serious player in primaries.

California and Texas, both members of the association, have a combined 89 electoral votes. That is one-third of what is needed to win a presidential election. Kansas only has six electoral votes. That's not enough for presidential candidates to take Kansas seriously.

Kansas first needs to ask itself how serious it is about having a primary.

— John Van Nostrand is publisher of Colby Free Press

Mike Keefe THE DENVER POST 03/16/07 www.caglecartoons.com



Free Choice Act isn't really 'free choice'

One bill the new Democrat majority is pushing through Congress would take away employees' right to vote on whether or not to have a union.

It may sound kind of un-American, but the bill — known in a neat twist of Orwellian verbiage as the Employee Free Choice Act — is a top goal of Big Labor.

Why? Because the changes under the bill would make it much easier for unions to coerce employees into approving a union. By eliminating open, secret-ballot elections, it also would take away whatever chance an employer has to fight unionization.

Under the new bill, if a union collects signed cards from a majority of the workers at a plant or office, the union would be approved. Today, if the union has cards from more than half the workers, the government will hold an election. Both union and management campaign.

What's the difference, you ask? Coercion.



steve haynes

• along the sappa

If you've been through a union election, as I have, you know organizers put subtle pressure on their coworkers to go along. This can be effective in getting them to sign a card, but inside the folds of the voting booth, many change their mind.

Workers who don't really want a union often sign cards for an election but have no intention of voting yes. They just want to please their friends and coworkers and get them off their backs.

This vote-switching really infuriates union organizers, who often lose an election after hearing promises of victory.

Under the new law, anti-union workers would be subject to peer pressure to go along

and sign a union card. That would be their only chance to vote.

Workers deserve the right to decide on a union without coercion. They deserve the right to vote in secret, as we all do when election time rolls around.

Employers deserve the right to give their side before the decision to organize is made, not after all the votes are in.

Unions want to increase their power, and there's some evidence they need to, but this isn't the way to do it. The current law is fair and adequate. It protects everyone's rights.

Faced with a "card-check" organizing drive like the bill would provide, I don't think I would have changed my decision. But many I knew did sign cards, then vote no. My friends among the organizing committee, most of them looking for new jobs after the vote failed, showed me their counts.

That's OK, because the secret ballot allows workers to voice their true feelings. Doing away with that right really would be un-American.

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Politics should be a kid-free zone

What kind of people are we? Is nothing sacred anymore? Are there no limits on how far the media can go in digging into the personal lives of candidates?

It's beginning to look like the answer is a resounding "No!" A brand new form of child abuse is the media's pursuit of the children of political candidates in an effort to trap them into taking pot shots at their parents.

Case in point: the media's attempt to exploit a split between Rudy Giuliani's son and daughter by his previous marriage.

Anybody familiar with the former New York mayor's marital problems knows that his divorce from Donna Hanover was, to say the very least, bitter. What was not known publicly was that it appears to have resulted in the estrangement from their father of the two children of the marriage.

That's a personal matter, one would think. Thanks to The New York Times, however, it's now very public.

Having no national security secrets to expose to al Qaeda and other enemies of the United States at the moment, the Times found time to go digging in their mud pit and drag Giuliani's two children into the mire.

Under photo caption "Noticeably Absent From the Giuliani Campaign: His Children," the Times reported that Giuliani's son Andrew Giuliani says he and his father are estranged and allowed as to how he would not be campaigning for his dad. It doesn't seem to have occurred to the Times that Andrew, who has his own life to live, might just have things to do other than campaigning for his dad.

As NewsBusters commented, "The only way for the rest of the country to become aware that Rudy's children are 'noticeably absent' is for someone to go out of their way to make it a point to inform them about it."

"Here we have the bastion of leftism trying to get at a candidate through his children in stark contrast to the task, tasking the left indulged in during the Clinton years," NewsBusters wrote.

It appears that the Times, which railed at conservatives for allegedly picking on Chelsea Clinton, now considers candidates' children fair game ... if they are Republicans, that is.

The Times case, however, is far from the worst case of the exploitation of children. It now appears that a pedophile Web site in Panama has posted photos of Barack Obama's two daughters — a criminal act over which the Senator has no control, since it is located in Panama.

During my Dad's campaigns, my sister Patti and my brother Ron didn't campaign for our



michael reagan

• making sense

father, but nobody tried to use their failure to hit the road for him as a way to attack Ronald Reagan by implying that this was a sign he wasn't a good man superbly equipped to be president of the United States.

It was understood they had other things to do.

What the public wants to know about Rudy Giuliani is if he wins the presidency is will he do something about taxes, is he going to be a strong proponent of our national defense and

is he for the things I'm for.

I couldn't care less about his relationship with his children. I don't care if his kids are not going to vote for him. That's his business and it's theirs, not mine.

One of the tragedies of our times is the fact that a man can no longer run for office alone — his whole family is dragged into the race. And that's enough to stop some very good men from even thinking about running. They just won't expose their families to the slime fests that campaigns have become, and to the media's lust for even a hint of scandal in their personal lives.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com.

