

from our viewpoint...

Death penalty right for Norwegian killer

If ever there was an argument in favor of the death penalty, it would be Anders Breivik.

Breivik is the confessed killer of 77 people in Norway on July 22 of last year. Disguised as a police officer, he set off a car bomb in Oslo that killed eight people then he shot and killed 69 people at a youth camp on Utoeya Island, many of them 18 or younger. Hundreds more were injured.

Breivik is proud of the killing spree but he denies any criminal responsibility. He says he did it to strike a blow against multiculturalism. The bomb was set off in a government building, and the youth retreat was a political party event. In a manifesto he published online, he said he was defending Europe from a Muslim invasion being enabled by the political party he attacked.

He's on trial in Norway now. This is the trial of century for them, drawing the sort of media attention that the Oklahoma City Bombing or O.J. Simpson trials did here.

Breivik faces either prison or committal to a psychiatric institution, it all depends on whether he's found sane or not. Several psychiatrists have declared him insane, a ruling he disputes. Per the Norwegian justice system, the case is being heard by a panel of five judges - two of them professional judges.

This case can be seen as a test of what justice is. He's charged with acts of terrorism, which carry a maximum sentence of 21 years, however Norway does have a system by which jail time can be extended, but it is rarely used. The maximum sentence anyone can get is 30 years.

Norway does not have the death penalty.

The Norwegian justice system has likely worked well for a long time. The country has one of the lowest homicide rates in the world - .68 for every 100,000 people. Organized crime is limited, only 60 out of every 100,000 citizens are incarcerated, compared to 700 in the U.S., and less than 10 percent of felonies are violent offenses.

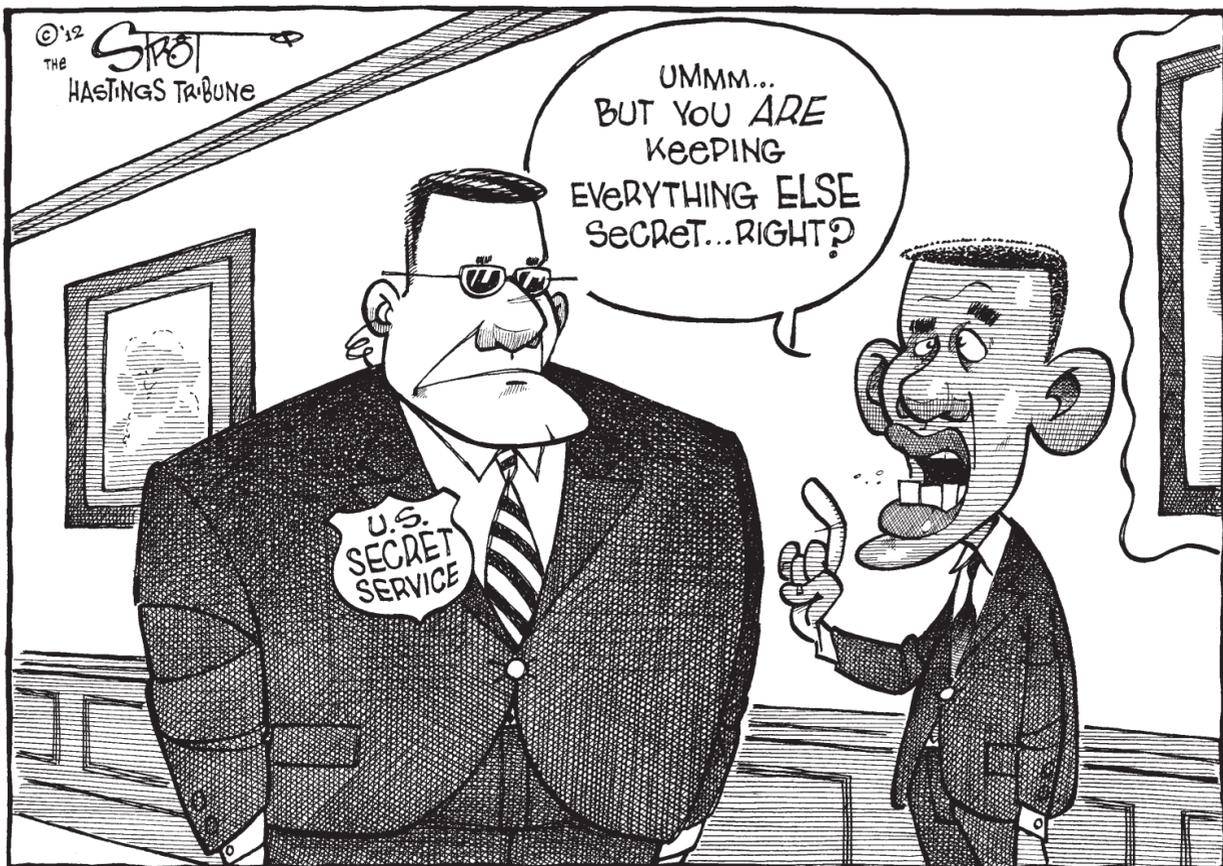
The Norwegian system favors a lighter touch. Most prisoners only complete about two thirds of their sentences. They allow prisoners to vote, and nonviolent offenders can sometimes wait year to start their prison term.

But 21 years doesn't cut it for someone who murdered 77 people in cold blood. Someone who confesses to this sort of attack, but is not remorseful and shows no signs of being able to be rehabilitated, should not have such a light sentence.

Nothing can bring back the people Breivik killed, but is anyone served by keeping him in prison or a mental hospital for 21 years? He shows not the slightest sign that a prison spell would change his mind or get him to show regret. If that is so than he should not be set free under any circumstances. He would be a threat to society. We would not and should not let Charles Manson free, nor would we have let go of Jeffrey Dahmer had he not been killed by a fellow inmate.

Even if Norway changes its justice system to allow for a life sentence, justice is not served by housing him at government expense, especially when Norwegian jails could be described as five-star hotels compared to American prisons.

This man must be removed from society in such a way as to not be a burden to society. While the death penalty is not a deterrent to these type of political extremist attacks, in this case it is the responsible thing for society to do. -Kevin Bottrell



Reduce gas prices with more production

As families across Kansas begin to plan for summer vacation, many are scaling back this year because of increasing gas prices. Escalating gas prices have also impacted business owners, who have been forced to pay higher costs to cover utility bills, and producers who have been paying more to bring their commodities to market. Consumers have also faced higher prices for goods and services because of the rising cost of transportation fuel. Higher energy prices are not only threatening our global competitiveness, they are hampering our economic recovery, and they will continue to rise until we take serious steps toward developing more of our country's natural resources.

Our country has some of the most plentiful, affordable and reliable energy resources available. In fact, the Congressional Research Service has reported that America has greater energy resources than China, Saudi Arabia, and Canada combined. Technological advances have made the exploration, extraction, and transportation of these resources safer and more efficient - but unfortunately, the Obama Administration has repeatedly blocked efforts to expand domestic energy production. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior, oil production on federal lands fell by 14 percent and natural gas production fell by 11 percent over the last year.

To increase domestic production and decrease our country's dependence on foreign energy sources, I have sponsored the 3-D Act, which would require the Administration to: reverse their cancellation of dozens of oil and gas leases; open areas previously restricted to responsible oil and gas development; and streamline the environmental review process to allow for meaningful reviews, while also



jerry moran
• in Congress

preventing unnecessary litigation.

The Administration has also delayed projects that will improve our energy infrastructure and energy security such as the Keystone XL pipeline. This private enterprise would create an estimated 20,000 jobs and bring billions to the U.S. economy. Instead of putting the entire project on hold, we should allow construction to begin in areas not subject to the re-routing so jobs can be created and our nation can have greater access to a more reliable energy source. S. 2041, which I have sponsored, would do just that.

Utility providers have also been targeted with increased regulations that threaten consumers with higher rates and the real possibility of rolling blackouts. Last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the Cross State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) that will force utility providers to choose between either providing adequate power and facing criminal penalties or cutting power and running afoul of reliability laws. I have introduced S.2300 to give Kansas utility companies the necessary time to comply with these new emissions standards.

The EPA has also issued a new regulation on industrial boilers used for energy production called the Boiler or Utility MACT. This regulation along with a new emissions rule proposed earlier this year will effectively prevent any new coal projects from coming online - which

will only drive up utility costs for consumers. I have sponsored S. 1392, the EPA Regulatory Relief Act, to nullify the MACT rule and allow utilities to continue to pursue coal as a means of providing electricity to their customers.

Renewable energy must also play a role in supplying our energy needs as new technologies allow for the increased commercialization of renewable fuels. Kansas is a leader in wind production and second only to Texas in wind resource potential. Innovation in biofuel production has also increased our ability to develop additional energy from renewable sources available in Kansas.

Nuclear energy is another necessary component that will help supply our nation's future energy needs and allow our country to be less reliant on other nations. I will continue to support initiatives to spur growth in the nuclear energy industry, including initiatives to streamline regulatory compliance.

Energy exploration must also be accompanied by energy conservation. When Americans drive more efficient vehicles and occupy energy-conserving buildings, they not only consume less energy, but they save money. At a time when gas prices are continuing to climb, we need to be looking for more innovative ways to help consumers save money on energy bills.

For the United States to remain competitive in the global market and to meet our country's energy needs, Congress must develop a comprehensive national energy policy. No single form of energy can provide the answer. By reducing our dependence on foreign sources of energy and developing our domestic resources, our country's economic and national security future will be brighter and more secure.

Construction zone safety is for everyone

To the Editor:

Orange barrels along Kansas highways are a positive sign - they show that improvements are being made to roadways, that jobs and economic development opportunities are increasing across the state and that motorists will be able to get where they are going more efficiently for years to come.

Behind those orange barrels are highway workers, and those workers deserve our respect and attention every time we enter a work zone. Having vehicles drive by within inches of you is scary and can be very dangerous.

What motorists don't realize is that work



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zone safety is for them as well. In fact, nearly 90 percent of the people injured or killed in work zone crashes are not highway workers - they're motorists. And the number one cause of crashes in work zones is inattention.

This is why we participate in National Work Zone Awareness Week, which is April 23-27.

It's a time to highlight the need for work zone safety for both highway workers and motorists, and it's an important message that needs to be remembered all year long. You can learn more about this effort on our website at www.ksdot.org. Just click on the Go Orange logo on the main page.

We encourage motorists to slow down and pay extra attention every time they see these orange barrels along the highways. Lives are on the line in work zones, and the life you save could be your own.

Mike King
Kansas Transportation Secretary

New tool for local control of water

Fresh on the heels of a quarter-inch of rain the night before, more than 60 farmers, irrigators and Colby Community College students watched as Gov. Sam Brownback signed a bill that allows for creation of local enhanced management areas, referred to as LEMAs. This new tool is intended to encourage more local action on saving water.

This legislation signed by Brownback allows local irrigators to collectively decide their future by initiating their own conservation plans to meet local guidelines.

It was only fitting Gov. Brownback traveled to Colby in northwestern Kansas for the bill signing intended to conserve the state's water supply and extend the life of the vital Ogallala Aquifer. Farmers in this region of the state began irrigating in the early '50s.

Irrigators of the Sheridan County Six were also in attendance. Members of this group, along with Wayne Bossert, manager of Groundwater Management District No. 4 in Colby pioneered the LEMA plan. They are considering a proposal that could reduce irrigation water use by approximately 20 percent



Insight this week
• john schlageck

throughout a five-year period.

"We must conserve our water so we can extend the useful life of the Ogallala Aquifer," Brownback told those attending. "This tool allows Kansans to join together and offer up ideas that work on the local level. It allows them to work together on behalf of their children and grandchildren to provide solutions that will save water for the next generation."

Moving forward, irrigators in the districts will now have an enhanced management/conservation option they can use and not be afraid of other things that might happen to them if they start to address their resource concerns in a formal way, district manager Bossert says.

"We believe this new approach will change the water conservation paradigm in the groundwater regions of Kansas," he adds.

"But we'll have to wait and see how the local water users start to develop and use this new authority."

Local farmers and their organizations demonstrated the vision to re-work the status quo to deal with the aquifer's decline. Tools like LEMA now provide Kansas irrigation farmers the ability to make intelligent use of the remaining water.

Additional tools including flex accounts, waterbanks and the extension of the Water Transition Assistance Program were also signed into law during the 2012 session. All will help with efforts to continue conserving and extending the life of the Ogallala Aquifer.

Kansas agriculture remains the economic key to vitality in Kansas and water is vital for agricultural production. These steps will benefit farmers today and help sustain this valuable water resource for future generations.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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Member: Kansas Press Association
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e-mail: star.news@nwkansas.com

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nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(nt.betz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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