

America's nutrition nannies invade school cafeterias

By: Congressman Tim Huelskamp

Our commander-in-chief and agriculture secretary are apparently moonlighting as Nutrition Nannies.

From our farms to our businesses to our doctors' offices, one would think that the Obama Administration should have run out of places to invade.

But, as school children and their parents learned as the kids headed back to the classrooms this fall, the administration has found one more place over which to exercise domination: the school cafeteria.

In the final weeks of 2010, as Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi prepared to pass the gavel to Republicans, House Democrats got a bill to President Obama's desk that empowered the U.S. Department of Agriculture to completely re-write school lunch standards.

With a title like "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act," one would think such a law would have a goal of making sure kids have full stomachs.

But, as school administrators and cooks, students, and parents have told me, the department's rules that resulted from this "Hunger-Free Act" are having the opposite effect.

Calorie limits are leaving student-athletes under-nourished ahead of intense practices. Three hours of practice after a 750-850 calorie lunch with limited protein at noon?

An emphasis on what goes on the plate – rather than into the body – has only increased the amount of food that goes into the trash can.

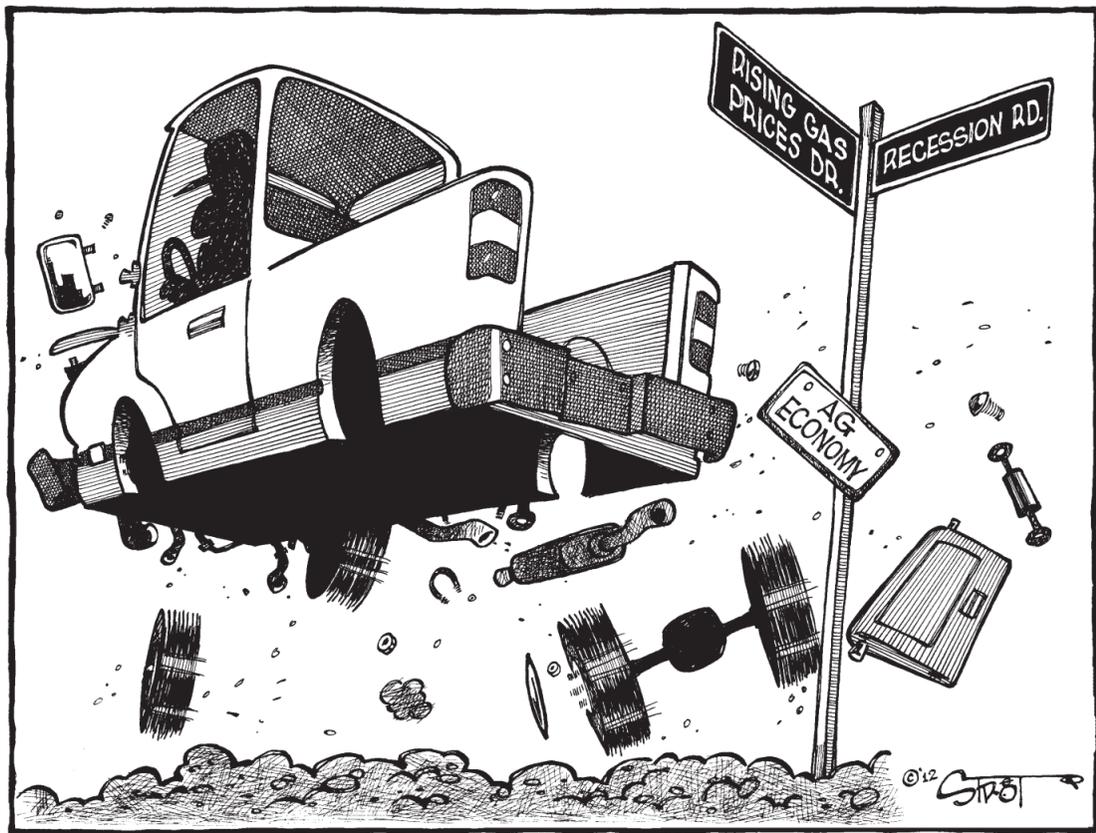
And, now that kids are not getting the food they need and want, many are going off campus for even less healthy alternatives, fast food or convenience-store fare, undermining altogether the whole purpose of the school lunch program.

The last Congress was wrong to pass the law that led to these new regulations. But, the current Congress can make it right by exercising our oversight function. Earlier this month, my colleague Steve King and I introduced the "No Hungry Kids Act" to repeal these school-lunch guidelines.

In the same way that one-size-fits-all does not work for what we teach in our classrooms, this legislation recognizes that no single set of cafeteria standards should apply to every single school across the nation – let alone every single student. By lifting the calorie caps and protecting the rights of parents to make decisions for their children, our bill will ensure that children get the food they need in order to stay alert in the classroom and healthy on the athletic fields.

The school-lunch program was created to combat hunger. That should still be the goal. But, when calories have been curtailed, less appealing food is on the plate and students are filling the cafeteria trash cans rather than their stomachs, the goal of overcoming hunger and obesity is defeated.

To learn more about the "No Hungry Kids Act" and to share your own family's experiences with the school lunch program, go to the website www.facebook.com/nutritionnannies.



The loud protests of a hitch hiker

"Out! Out of the car!" I shouted to the hitch hiker in the backseat of our van. "What do you think you're doing?"

To which our uninvited passenger answered, "Meow, meow, mee-ow."

In cat language that probably translates, "Well, you left the door open. It's all your fault."

Jim and I were leaving for town with a week's worth of plastic milk and water jugs, tin cans and cardboard recyclables piled high in the backseat of the van. We had driven about a block when we heard Bootsie, our white-footed part-Siamese, let out a mournful yowl. During the loading process she had climbed into the vehicle (probably found a soft, warm spot for a nap), and there she was when we drove away. We hit reverse and backed up; opened the side door; and unceremoniously kicked her out.

Cats, notoriously, don't like riding in cars, so she didn't hesitate getting out. But not without some vocal protest.

-ob-

This round of egg-hatching may be another bust. We expected to see some kind of action by Wednesday or Thursday – Friday at the latest. The weekend passed and still nothing. Two more days and then I'm calling it.

Actually, I'll be calling Jim. Do you have any idea how explosive undeveloped eggs can be that have been in an incubator for a month? Do you have any idea how toxic the contents can be?

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



I'll say, "Dear, Honey, Sweetie Pie," It might help if I have a chocolate crème pie in my hands when I say this. "Would you mind disposing of these unhatched eggs for me? You're so good at stuff like that."

He'll probably do it, because he really is better at stuff like that than I am. He'll put them in a sealed container and transport them to the trash barrel.

Come to think of it our military could save a lot of money on developing new explosives. Just arm our troops with a bushel or two of rotten eggs to lob at the enemy. A few direct "hits" and they would surrender in no time.

-ob-

Just heard on the news this morning that a manufacturing plant in Japan exploded and it will have dire consequences on America. What could that possibly be you ask. Seems that particular plant produces one fifth of the world's supply of a specific component used in making disposable diapers.

Wow! Now there's a tragedy. A shortage of disposable diapers. Imagine what would happen if people actually had to resort to using cloth

diapers. Why landfills wouldn't be full; families might save some money; and kids would be potty-trained sooner.

The flip-side, however, is you can't find cloth diapers, even if you wanted to use them. They are probably only sold in novelty stores now. I doubt if new parents would even know how to operate a cloth diaper if they had one.

I only had two children; but I changed diapers. A lot! Oh, sure. There's the disgusting diaper pail and the whole rinsing in the toilet thing. Other than that, there's not much difference. They both still accomplish the same purpose for which they were intended. One just costs a whole lot less than the other.

I actually sort of enjoyed folding freshly laundered diapers. Especially, when they had been dried on the clothesline. They smelled so fresh. As for folding, personally, I preferred the triangular fold. Sort of like a kite. It was also reassuring to see that huge pile of clean "nappies", neatly stacked in the diaper bag. Kind of like a safety net.

I'm probably not doing a very good sales job on the benefits of cloth diapers. Most modern day parents would tell me their time is worth something and they don't need to spend it doing load after load of laundry. Or they would say their daycare providers insist on disposables. Whatever. Cloth diapers are another thing of the "good old days." Like rotary dial phones and record players.

Investing yourself in your community

While Kansas is blessed with many resources, without question its people are the most valuable. While traveling from Colby to Leavenworth a couple weeks ago, the importance of people came into sharp focus once again.

One stop on this journey was in the small town of Gove in northwestern Kansas. Approximately 75 hardy souls reside in this farm and ranch community.

Main Street is a whopping three blocks long. Only a handful of businesses remain on both sides of the street including a community café, a small grocery, a yarn and antique shop, a museum and of course the county courthouse. Rarely are there more than two or three vehicles parked on the street.

The folks who inhabit this community and the surrounding farms and ranches wear many hats and those active few log countless hours nurturing and tending to their home community.

"It's home to each and every one of us," says Rayna Kopriva. She's lived a few miles southwest of Gove most of her 34 years.

"Nearly all of our citizens contribute," she says. "We want to make our little

Insight

John Schlageck



town the best we can."

Kopriva is one of the younger citizens. Many of the older residents consider her "the young kid" of the community.

"I'm everyone's daughter, 'cause I'm still around," she says. "Every year the youngsters of the community graduate. We celebrate this milestone in their lives and they leave to find jobs elsewhere. They visit, but they don't return home to live."

While Kopriva spends plenty of her time helping husband, Daryl, with the farm and livestock, she's also worked at nearly every business in town including the café and grocery store. Kopriva has served on nearly every board as well.

She's also served 12 years as the town's librarian. This stucco building sits on the south side of Main Street in Gove. Once the grade school, this building was converted to the

community's library and houses nearly 8,000 books.

For Kopriva the library is much more than a summer reading program or a place to check out books.

"It's really one of two main gathering places," she says. "People come here to visit just like they do when they eat at the café on the north side of town."

Gove isn't the only one of its kind in Kansas. All across Kansas, the song remains the same. People have left small communities to make their living and raise their families elsewhere. This has left fewer and fewer people behind to make the community viable. It's a progression that's been going on in our state for generations.

Still, rural communities thrive and prosper when farmers, ranchers and small community businesses work together for the common good. The people, or human resources of a community, are individuals who make up the town and their skills create the ability to lead others, manage what is there and produce goods and services.

It's the people who make a community what it is, and the people who keep it alive.

Dear Editor,
To the Norton City Council, bonding company and the builders of the swimming pool...

Why isn't the total cost of the pool, plus or minus, being furnished to the people of Norton?

The way things are going statewide and locally, can we afford a debt of four million, five million or seven million?

People of Norton think about this and give promoters of the pool a call.

H.J. Hank Austerman
Norton



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Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654. Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

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