

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Speed Limit Change Zipped Through Pierre

CAPITAL JOURNAL, Pierre (March 31): The speed on South Dakota interstates jumps to 80 mph today, making South Dakota only the fifth state to allow speeds that high.

Whether you like the change or not, you should be concerned about the hot-rod fashion in which this change rocketed through the South Dakota Legislature — not as a regular bill that would have gone through the committee process that allows the public a chance to testify, but as an amendment offered at the last moment on a big bill to fund roads and bridges.

Does increasing the speed limit really have much relation to funding roads and bridges? Only in the sense that letting motorists drive a little faster means they will burn more fuel and pay more in gas taxes, perhaps. But the fact is, that addition to the bill took the public by surprise and appeared to surprise lawmakers, too.

That's no way to make a change that could lead to more fatalities on South Dakota roads.

At the very least, South Dakotans should have been given ample time to comment and perhaps fine-tune the proposal. Should we be concerned about revelations from tire companies that some truck tires aren't designed for such high speeds? Should we also have increased South Dakota's minimum speed of 40 mph on the interstates? Should we have discussed what South Dakota stands to gain from this change, besides increased risk to life and limb? All good questions we might have considered.

It was the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives who engineered this amendment, we're told. What do House Republican leaders dislike about the usual process of making a change of this magnitude, we wonder? Instead, as the *Rapid City Journal* reported, this amendment was discussed for a mere 90 seconds before it was added to the highway bill during a March 9 meeting of the House State Affairs Committee.

That should make all of us lean on the brakes. The Capital Journal is not for or against the higher speed limit; what we are for is the process that we have followed for generations for initiating major changes in state policy. Conservatives, of all people, ought to conserve that. And that is what our House Republican leadership left in the dust in the haste to hoist the speed limit.

Unlike Wyoming, which proposed increasing its speed limit as a regular bill, studied the issue, and took testimony, South Dakota did nothing of the kind. There was no opportunity to study the matter. Without a doubt, the new speed limit will be a contributing factor to some accidents on South Dakota's interstates from this day forward, and very possibly South Dakota might end up doing what Wyoming did with more forethought — deciding that the new speed limit is not appropriate on some stretches of its interstates.

We like the way Wyoming did it.
We don't like the way South Dakota did it.
We have the legislative process that we have for a reason. We should have followed it here.

P&D LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

● Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

● In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

● Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

● Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Monday, April 6, the 96th day of 2015. There are 269 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 6, 1965, the United States launched Intelsat I, also known as the "Early Bird" communications satellite, into geosynchronous orbit.

On this date: In 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized by Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York.

In 1865, in the closing days of the Civil War, Union forces led by Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant defeated Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in the Battle of Sailor's Creek.

In 1896, the first modern Olympic games formally opened in Athens, Greece.

In 1909, American explorers Robert E. Peary and Matthew A. Henson and four Inuits became the first men to reach the North Pole.

In 1917, Congress approved a declaration of war against Germany.

In 1945, during World War II, the Japanese warship Yamato and nine other vessels sailed on a suicide mission to attack the U.S. fleet off Okinawa; the fleet was intercepted the next day.

In 1947, the first Tony Awards were held in New York. (This event, focusing on individual achievement, did not specifically recognize plays or musicals; honorees included Ingrid Bergman, Helen Hayes, Jose Ferrer and Fredric March and playwright Arthur Miller.)

In 1954, a month after being criticized by newsmen Edward R. Murrow on CBS' "See It Now," Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., given the chance to respond on the program, charged that Murrow had, in the past, "engaged in propaganda for Communist causes."

In 1963, the United States signed an agreement to sell the Polaris missile system to Britain.

In 1971, Russian-born composer Igor Stravinsky, 88, died in New York City.

In 1985, William J. Schroeder became the first artificial heart recipient to be discharged from the hospital as he moved into an apartment in Louisville, Kentucky.

In 1998, country singer Tammy Wynette died at her Nashville home at age 55.

Ten years ago: Iraq's new government finally began to take shape as lawmakers elected as president Jalal Talabani, a Kurdish leader who promised to represent all ethnic and religious groups. Fifteen U.S. service members and three American civilians were killed when their

Chinook helicopter crashed in Afghanistan. Prince Rainier III of Monaco died at age 81, leaving the throne to Prince Albert II.

Five years ago: The White House announced a fundamental shift in U.S. nuclear strategy that called the spread of atomic weapons to rogue states or terrorists a worse threat than the nuclear Armageddon feared during the Cold War. Former Soviet diplomat Anatoly Dobrynin, 90, died in Moscow. Actor Corin Redgrave, 70, died in London. Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation, died in Oklahoma at age 64.

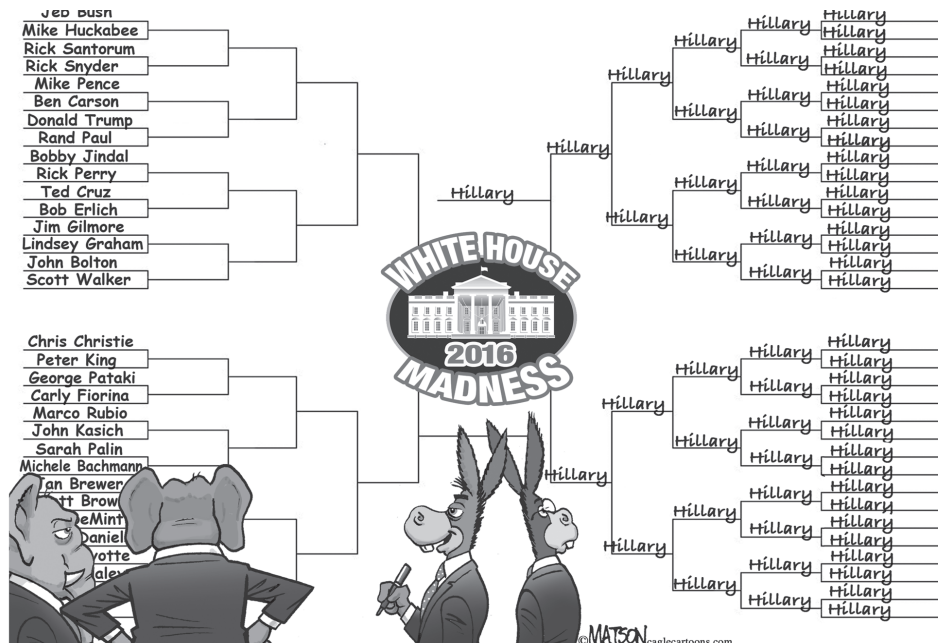
One year ago: Legendary Hollywood actor Mickey Rooney, 93, died in North Hollywood. U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel delivered a two-pronged warning to Asia Pacific nations, announcing in Tokyo that the U.S. would send two additional ballistic missile destroyers to Japan to counter the North Korean threat, and saying China had better respect its neighbors. The U.S. Navy rescued an American family with an ill 1-year-old from a sailboat that had broken down hundreds of miles off the Mexican coast. George Strait won his second entertainer of the year — 25 years after winning his first — and Miranda Lambert and Keith Urban teamed up to earn top honors at the Country Music Awards.

Today's Birthdays: Nobel Prize-winning scientist James D. Watson is 87. Composer-conductor Andre Previn is 86. Country singer Merle Haggard is 78. Actor Billy Dee Williams is 78. Actor Roy Thinnies is 77. Writer-comedian Phil Austin (Firesign Theatre) is 74. Movie director Barry Levinson is 73. Actor John Ratzenberger is 68. Baseball Hall of Famer Bert Blyleven is 64. Actress Marielu Henner is 63. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Janet Lynn is 62. Actor Michael Rooker is 60. Former U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., is 59. Rock musician Warren Haynes is 55. Rock singer-musician Frank Black is 50. Actress Ari Meyers is 46. Actor Paul Rudd is 46. Actor-producer Jason Hervey is 43. Rock musician Markku Lappalainen is 42. Actor Zach Braff is 40. Actor Joel Garland (TV: "Orange is the New Black") is 40. Actress Candace Cameron Bure is 39. Actor Teddy Sears is 38. Jazz and rhythm-and-blues musician Robert Glasper is 37. Actress Eliza Coupe is 34. Folk singer-musician Kenneth Pattengale (Milk Carton Kids) is 33. Actor Bret Harison is 33. Actor Charlie McDermott is 25.

Thought for Today: "History is the ship carrying living memories to the future." — Sir Stephen Spender, British poet and critic (1909-1995).

FROM THE BIBLE

[Jesus] mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." John 2:5. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



"YOU REALLY SHOULD BE DOWN TO THE FINAL FOUR BY NOW."

Capitol Notebook

SD State Senate Now In Need Of New GOP Leaders

BY BOB MERCER
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Tim Rave said the resignation of Dan Lederman from the state Senate arrived as a surprise on the final day of the 2015 legislation session.

Rave, from Baltic, was the Senate Republicans leader. Lederman, from Dakota Dunes, was the Senate Republicans assistant leader.

Lederman's resignation took effect immediately.

Rave's resignation as senator took effect the next day.

Lederman plans to spend more time with family. Rave accepted a promotion to vice president for government relations with Sanford Health.

Corey Brown, R-Gettysburg, remains at the top as the Senate president pro tem.

It would be unusual for Brown to take double duty, even if just for one year, as Senate Republican leader and as president pro tem.

He is in his fourth consecutive — and therefore final — term in the Senate. He could take the reins as Senate Republican leader for the remainder of 2015 and the 2016 session and allow the other 34 senators to choose a new president pro tem.

Otherwise there isn't a clear choice for either of the Senate Republican slots.

Republicans held a super-majority of 27 Senate seats before the resignations. It is likely Gov. Dennis Daugaard, a Republican, would appoint Republicans to succeed Rave and Lederman.

Senate Republicans have three whips that serve in roles as go-betweens for their assigned groups of their party's senators. The three are Ried Holien of Watertown, Deb Soholt of Sioux Falls and Ernie Otten of Tea.

Each would have strong support but each

also would face strong opposition in a run to succeed Rave.

There are other experienced Republican senators who have the capability too.

Larry Tidemann of Brookings, Deb Peters of Hartford, Brock Greenfield of Clark, Mike Vehle of Mitchell, Craig Tieszen of Rapid City and Phyllis Heineman of Sioux Falls immediately come to mind.

But each would be challenged to find 14 votes in a Senate Republican caucus that has shown hard splits over issues such as Common Core, transgender athletic policy, taxes and a national constitutional convention for balancing the federal budget.

So where to look?

Three Republican legislative leaders in recent times came from the ranch country between the Missouri River and the Black Hills.

Larry Gabriel of Cottonwood led the House for three terms from 1993 through 1998; Eric Bogue of Dupree the Senate for two terms from 2003 through 2006; and Larry Rhoden of Union Center the House for two terms from 2005 through 2008.

That part of South Dakota is where Sen. Gary Cammack lives.

Cammack, 61, runs a ranch supply business at Union Center. He is a conservative Republican who's served one term in the House and is in his first year in the Senate.

Whether he would want the leadership post isn't publicly known.

But his reputation in the Capitol is a man of courtesy and fairness, character traits he's shown as chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

And he is unlikely to have an election challenger from his heavily Republican district.

Majority leader is a big job. Tim Rave did it very well.



Bob MERCER

Dixie Still A Place Apart

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.
Tribune Content Agency

On the day after the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, Abraham Lincoln appeared at a second-floor window of the White House. He was acceding to the wishes of citizens who had gathered to serenade their president in this moment of victory. They called for a speech but Lincoln demurred. Instead he asked the band to play "Dixie."

The song — a homesick Southerner's lament — had been the de facto anthem of the Confederacy during 48 bloody months of civil war, but Lincoln declared now that the South held no monopoly on it. "I have always thought 'Dixie' one of the best tunes I have ever heard," he said. It was probably his way of encouraging a nation that had ripped itself apart along sectional lines to begin knitting itself together again.

Lincoln received an answer of sorts two days later as beaten rebels surrendered their weapons to the Union Army. Union General Joshua Chamberlain remarked to Southern counterpart Henry Wise that perhaps now "brave men may become good friends."

Wise's reply was bitter as smoke. "You're mistaken, sir," he said. "You may forgive us, but we won't be forgiven. There is a rancor in our hearts which you little dream of. We hate you, sir."

Two days after that, April 14, Lincoln received a more direct response. John Wilkes Booth, famed actor and Southern sympathizer, shot him in the head.

Thus ended arguably the most consequential week in American history. This week, the events of that week move fully 150 years into the past. They are further away than they have ever been. And yet, they feel quite close. If the "hate" Henry Wise spoke of has dissipated in the 15 decades gone by, what has not faded is Dixie's sense of itself as a place apart and a people done wrong. Small wonder.

Twice now — at gunpoint in the 1860s, by force of law a century later — the rest of the country has imposed change on the South, made it do what it did not want to do, i.e., extend basic human rights to those it had

systematically brutalized and oppressed. No other part of the country has ever experienced that, has ever seen itself so harshly chastised by the rest.

Both times, the act was moral and necessary. But who can deny, or be surprised, that in forcing the South to do the right thing, the rest of the country fostered an abiding resentment, an enduring "apartness," made the South a region defined by resistance. Name the issue — immigration, race, abortion, education, criminal justice — and law and custom in Dixie have long stood stubbornly apart from the rest of the country. But the headline 150 years later is that that apartness no longer confines itself to the boundaries of the Confederacy.

In 2015, for example, we see the old pattern repeating in the fight over marriage equality — most of the country having decided as a moral matter that this has to happen, yet a few people resisting as the change is imposed over their wishes. But if resistance is fierce in Arkansas, it also is fierce in Indiana. The sense of apartness is less geographically constrained. Who knows if that's progress?

There is nothing predestined about America's ultimate ability to overcome its contradictions. This was true in 1865 and it's true now. It will always be true of a people bound, not by common ancestry but only common cause — a presumed fealty to self-evident truths.

America shattered in 1861. Lincoln forced the bloody pieces back together at the cost of over 600,000 lives, one of them his own. It never did knit itself back together in the way he had hoped — in the way he might have helped it to, had he survived.

Instead, it became this once broken thing where the seams of repair still show. And the question of that consequential week is the question of every day since then. Can you make a country out of that?

So far, so good.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for *The Miami Herald*, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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DISSIDENCE: "Acceptance by government of a dissident press is a measure of the maturity of a nation." — William O. Douglas

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