

The Press & Dakotan

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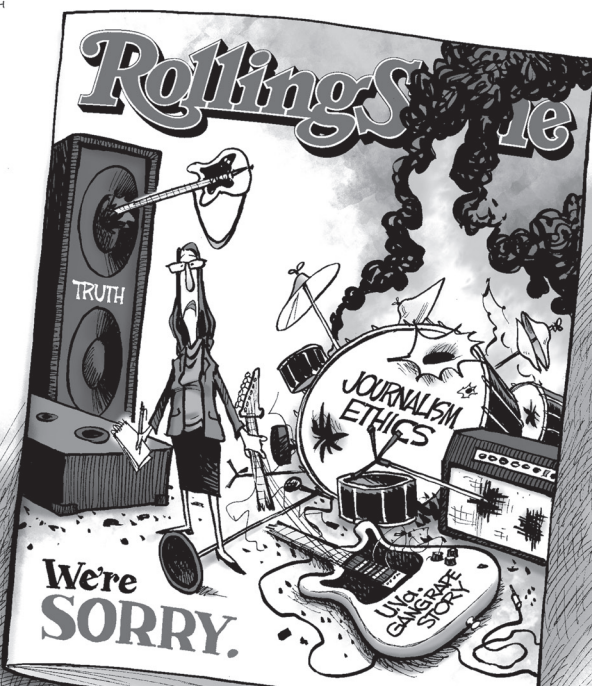
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OPINION
A Bad Equation
For SD Education

South Dakota's education system is facing a different kind of math problem. According to a report released by the School Administrators of South Dakota (SASD), one in three teaching candidates who recently graduated from a college or university in the state took jobs outside of South Dakota. Meanwhile, a survey released last November found that the number of teachers in South Dakota eligible for retirement exceeded the number of students in the state enrolled in teacher education programs. Now, do the math and tell us what that says about the future of teacher availability in South Dakota. In broad terms, none of this should be a real surprise — unless you've been listening to certain voices in Pierre. On one hand, the teacher shortage this state is facing has been brewing for a long time, thanks in no small or insignificant part to the fact that South Dakota ranks dead last in the nation in teacher pay. That also means, of course, that our state ranks last when compared to neighboring states, which is most of those outbound teachers probably go. As a result, it is getting harder for schools to get a good supply of applicants for open teaching positions. And indeed, some schools don't get ANY applicants for positions. Then again, the Legislature in Pierre officially has a hard time acknowledging this shortage even exists. And this winter, the governor didn't even mention the matter in his State of the State address. The ultimate solution was to form a blue-ribbon task force to examine the matter and come up with recommendations. This sounds great ... If those recommendations (whatever they may be) turn into reality. Until then, let's reserve judgment. The problem is, waiting "until then" means that, in the meantime, more newly minted educators who have been trained in this state and could be enlightening young minds here are going elsewhere to make a living. And more veteran educators are leaving the profession, with fewer candidates available to take their place. That kind of math can produce only dire answers. "South Dakota is running out of teachers," declared SASD executive director Rob Monson ... But this is a familiar tune to anyone who has followed this issue. And people like Monson and even editorials like this one are simply preaching to the same choir yet again. The thing is, no responsible person is against education. No one wants to see our schools falter and turn into factories for failure. We have to believe there is a broad desire to fix these issues for the good of the state and its future. But when you're trying to get enough minds that collectively make up two bodies of our Legislature to see a matter the same way and with the same degree of urgency, it can become a frustrating process to move any issue forward. The task force set to convene may be this state's best hope to truly address the teacher shortage issue before South Dakota reaches a tipping point in regards to its supply of teachers. It needs to develop a cohesive direction and lay down priorities. But the recommendations the group comes up with are only a small part of the answer. The real trick is going to be getting enough people to listen to those recommendations and see the current math as the dreadful equation that it is.

kjh

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the PRESS & DAKOTAN. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press Today is Wednesday, April 8, the 98th day of 2015. There are 267 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 8, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act, which provided money for programs such as the Works Progress Administration.

On this date: In 1820, the Venus de Milo statue was discovered by a farmer on the Greek island of Milos.

In 1864, the United States Senate passed, 38-6, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery. (The House of Representatives passed it in January 1865; the amendment was ratified and adopted in December 1865.)

In 1904, Longacre Square in Manhattan was renamed Times Square after The New York Times.

In 1913, the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, providing for popular election of United States senators (as opposed to appointment by state legislatures), was ratified. President Woodrow Wilson became the first chief executive since John Adams to address Congress in person as he asked lawmakers to enact tariff reform.

In 1946, the League of Nations assembled in Geneva for its final session.

In 1952, President Harry S. Truman seized the American steel industry to avert a nationwide strike. (The Supreme Court later ruled that Truman had overstepped his authority, opening the way for a seven-week strike by steelworkers.)

In 1961, a suspected bomb exploded aboard the passenger liner MV Dara in the Persian Gulf, causing it to sink; 238 of the 819 people aboard were killed.

In 1974, Hank Aaron of the Atlanta Braves hit his 715th career home run in a game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, breaking Babe Ruth's record.

In 1975, "The Godfather Part II" won the Academy Award for best picture; Eileen Burstin won best actress for "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" while Art Carney received best actor for "Harry and Tonto."

In 1981, General of the Army Omar N. Bradley died in New York at age 88.

In 1990, Ryan White, the teenage AIDS patient whose battle for acceptance had gained national attention, died in Indianapolis at age 18. The cult TV series "Twin Peaks" premiered on ABC.

In 1994, Kurt Cobain, singer and guitarist for the grunge band Nirvana, was found dead in Seattle from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound; he was 27.

Ten years ago: With presidents and kings looking on, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in St. Peter's Square sang, applauded and chanted for the Catholic

Church to declare John Paul II a saint as the pope was laid to rest.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed the New START treaty in Prague. Authorities in Cancun, Mexico, found the body of Monica Beresford-Redman, the wife of "Pimp My Ride" and former "Survivor" producer Bruce Beresford-Redman, who was convicted by a Mexico court in March 2015 of murdering her and sentenced to 12 years in prison (he continues to maintain his innocence). Malcolm McLaren, 64, former manager of the Sex Pistols, died in Switzerland. Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the first black prime minister of an interim white-dominated government before Zimbabwe's independence, died six days before his 85th birthday.

One year ago: The U.S. said it would keep its current force of 450 land-based nuclear missiles but remove 50 from their launch silos as part of a plan to bring the U.S. into compliance with a 2011 U.S.-Russia arms control treaty. Breanna Stewart scored 21 points and Stefanie Dolson added 17 points and 16 rebounds to help UConn beat Notre Dame 79-58, giving the Huskies a record ninth women's national championship.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian Sheeky Greene is 89. Actor-turned-diplomat John Gavin is 84. Author and Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Seymour Hersh is 78. Former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is 77. Basketball Hall-of-Famer John Havlicek is 75. "Mouseketeer" Darlene Gillespie is 74. Rhythm-and-blues singer J.J. Jackson is 74. Singer Peggy Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 74. Songwriter-producer Leon Huff is 73. Actor Hywel Bennett is 71. Actor Stuart Pankin is 69. Rock musician Steve Howe is 68. Former House Republican Leader Tom DeLay is 68. Movie director John Madden is 66. Rock musician Mel Schacher (Grand Funk Railroad) is 64. Actor John Schneider is 55. "Survivor" winner Richard Hatch is 54. Rock musician Izzy Stradlin is 53. Singer Julian Lennon is 52. Actor Dean Norris is 52. Rock singer-musician Donita Sparks is 52. Rapper Biz Markie is 51. Actress Robin Wright is 49. Actress Patricia Arquette is 47. Rock singer Craig Honeycutt (Everything) is 45. Rock musician Darren Jessee is 44. Actress Emma Caulfield is 42. Actress Katee Sackhoff is 35. Actor Taylor Kitsch is 34. Rock singer-musician Eliza Koenig (Vampire Weekend) is 31. Actor Taran Noah Smith is 31. Actress Kirsten Storms is 31. Rock musician Jamie Sierota (Echoborn) is 22. Actress Sadie Calvano is 18.

Thought for Today: "Computers are useless. They can only give you answers." — Pablo Picasso, Spanish artist (born 1881, died this date in 1973).

FROM THE BIBLE

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

How Big Money Buys Off
Criticism Of Big Money

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Content Agency

Not long ago I was asked to speak to a religious congregation about widening inequality. Shortly before I began, the head of the congregation asked that I not advocate raising taxes on the wealthy. He said he didn't want to antagonize certain wealthy congregants on whose generosity the congregation depended.

I had a similar exchange last year with the president of a small college who had invited me to give a lecture that his board of trustees would be attending. "I'd appreciate it if you didn't criticize Wall Street," he said, explaining that several of the trustees were investment bankers.

It seems to be happening all over. A nonprofit group devoted to voting rights decides it won't launch a campaign against big money in politics for fear of alienating wealthy donors.

A Washington think tank releases a study on inequality that fails to mention the role big corporations and Wall Street have played in weakening the nation's labor and antitrust laws, presumably because the think tank doesn't want to antagonize its corporate and Wall Street donors.

A major university shapes research and courses around economic topics of interest to its biggest donors, notably avoiding any mention of the increasing power of large corporations and Wall Street on the economy.

It's bad enough that big money is buying off politicians. It's also buying off nonprofits that used to be sources of investigation, information and social change, from criticizing big money.

Other sources of funding are drying up. Research grants are waning. Funds for social services of churches and community groups are growing scarce. Legislatures are cutting back university funding. Appropriations for public television, the arts, museums and libraries are being slashed.

So what are nonprofits to do?

"There's really no choice," a university dean told me. "We've got to go where the money is."

And more than at any time since the Gilded Age of the late 19th century, the money is now in the pockets of big corporations and the super wealthy.

So the presidents of universities, congregations and think tanks are now kissing wealthy posteriors as never before.

But that money often comes with strings.

When Comcast, for example, finances a nonprofit like the International Center for Law and Economics, the center supports Comcast's proposed merger with Time Warner Cable.

When the Charles Koch Foundation pledges \$1.5 million to Florida State University's economics department, it stipulates that a Koch-appointed advisory committee will select professors and undertake annual evaluations.

The Koch brothers now fund 350 programs



Robert B. REICH

at more than 250 colleges and universities across America. You can bet that funding doesn't underwrite research on inequality and environmental justice.

David Koch's \$23 million of donations to public television earned him positions on the boards of two prominent public-broadcasting stations. It also guaranteed that a documentary critical of the Kochs didn't air.

As Ruby Lerner, president and founding director of Creative Capital, a grant-making institution for the arts, told *The New Yorker's* Jane Mayer, "self-censorship" practiced by public television "raises issues about what public television means. They are in the middle of so much funding pressure."

David Koch has also donated tens of millions of dollars to the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and sits on their boards.

A few weeks ago, dozens of climate scientists and environmental groups asked that museums of science and natural history "cut all ties" with fossil fuel companies and philanthropists like the Koch brothers.

"When some of the biggest contributors to climate change and funders of misinformation on climate science sponsor exhibitions ... they undermine public confidence in the validity of the institutions responsible for transmitting scientific knowledge," their statement said.

Even though gift agreements by universities, museums and other nonprofits often bar donors from being involved in decisions about what's investigated or shown, such institutions don't want to bite hands that feed them.

This isn't a matter of ideology. Wealthy progressives can exert as much quiet influence over the agendas of nonprofits as wealthy conservatives.

It's a matter of big money influencing what should and should not be investigated, revealed and discussed — especially when it comes to the tightening nexus between concentrated wealth and political power, and how that power further enhances great wealth.

Philanthropy is noble. But when it's mostly in the hands of a few super-rich and giant corporations, and is the only game available, it can easily be abused.

Our democracy is directly threatened when the rich buy off politicians. No less dangerous is the quieter and more insidious buy-off of institutions democracy depends on to research, investigate, expose and mobilize action against what is occurring.

Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Senior Fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. His new film, "Inequality for All," is now out on Netflix, iTunes and Amazon.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Police Arsenals

John Magnuson, Yankton
Retired Law Enforcement

Thank you to Doug Johnson for his recent letter regarding the M-79 grenade launcher previously in the local police department arsenal (*Press & Dakotan*, March 23). Thanks also to Chief Brian Paulsen for his response.

As a local resident, I read the *P&D's* Daily Record including the section on arrests. If the Daily Record accurately reflects the type and level of crime in the Yankton area, any kind of launcher would appear to be a totally inappropriate tool for managing local crimes.

This seriously calls into question the judgment of why this ever happened in the first place and also begs the question of what else our PD has that may also be grossly inappropriate. If they are to protect and to serve, we

should, as taxpayers, determine reasonable limits. In the spirit of openness in a democracy, our PD should publish the inventory of their arsenal for all of us to review in the *P&D*. Let us decide limits.

Secondly, if poor judgment was exercised in procuring an M-79, there may be poor decision-making in other areas, as well. One problem is that bad decisions can waste money that we can't afford. With the level of reported crime, who determines the level of officers and the amount of equipment needed?

The M-79 may be the canary in the coal mine to show lack of monetary discretion. Maybe cash could be reprogrammed for better uses. What unbiased reviewer evaluates this? Given the county's financial woes, would it not be wise to consider a hiring and salary freeze? No politician wants to appear soft on crime but maybe we are overdoing it.

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.

DESTINY: "Our republic and its press will rise or fall together."

— Joseph Pulitzer

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