



# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

## OPINION | OUR VIEW

### New Safety Rules Aid Young Drivers

**O**K, this may actually be a step in the right direction. What we refer to today is a collection of bills that South Dakota's Senate Transportation Committee approved Monday to promote safety among the state's youngest drivers. Among other things, the bills would prohibit beginning drivers from using electronic devices while they are operating vehicles until they turn 16. The package also calls for a standardization of the drivers' education system around the state and a longer wait for those with learners' permits to drive while unaccompanied. One big impetus behind these rules is that South Dakota's teen drivers have among the higher rates of fatal crashes in the country. According to government studies, South Dakota ranked eighth in the nation last year in fatal teen accidents, with a rate that was 149 percent higher than the adult rate. Also, The Associated Press reported that motor vehicle crashes represented 44 percent of all deaths among South Dakotans ages 14-17. A factor that contributes to the motor vehicle accident rates — fatal and nonfatal — for ALL ages is the use of electronic devices such as mobile phones and MP3 players while operating a vehicle. Thus, while these devices do not encompass the entire problem for highway accidents, addressing the use of these devices by motorists is at least a move toward an incremental solution. But that's easier said than done in South Dakota. Legislation that would, for instance, ban texting while driving has faced an uphill battle for years in this state. You know the reasons why: It would be too difficult to enforce, it makes the government too intrusive into private affairs, trying to text out of view of law enforcement will also cause accidents ... on and on and on. And there, each winter, the idea dies. (This year's version is Senate Bill 142, and it has yet to be acted upon, according to the state's website.) So, when the Senate committee embraced these measures this week, it was a good sign. It showed that our lawmakers actually do recognize the dangers created by distracted driving. This is especially true of young and inexperienced drivers, and that's where this legislation makes a great deal of sense. What we've argued before about an overall texting ban applies here, too: Such legislation would send a message, even if it would be difficult to enforce. It would be a reminder to these young drivers that reckless habits can carry a damaging cost. Meanwhile, we also like the notion of standardizing the drivers' education programs in the state. It would create a coordinated educational effort to teach young drivers the rules of the very same road that we all share. Overall, there's a lot to like in these proposals, for they serve as a means of training young drivers in the right ways and smart ways to operate their vehicles. There's more work to do in making our roadways safe, but these measures are a very good start.

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## The Non-Zero-Sum Society

BY ROBERT B. REICH  
Tribune Media Services

As President Obama said in his inaugural address, America "cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it." Not even the very wealthy can continue to succeed without a broader-based prosperity. That's because 70 percent of economic activity in America is consumer spending. When most Americans are becoming poorer, they're less able to spend. Without their spending, the economy can't get out of first gear. That's a big reason why the recovery continues to be anemic. Almost a quarter of all jobs in America now pay wages below the poverty line for a family of four. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that over the next decade, seven out of 10 growth occupations will be low-wage — like serving customers at big-box retailers and fast-food chains. At this rate, who's going to buy all the goods and services America is capable of producing? We can't return to the kind of debt-financed consumption that caused the bubble in the first place. It's not a zero-sum game. Wealthy Americans would do better with smaller shares of a rapidly growing economy than with the large shares they now possess of an economy that's barely moving. If they were rational, the wealthy would support public investments in education and job training, a world-class infrastructure (transportation, water and sewage, energy, Internet) and basic research — all of which would make the American workforce more productive. If they were rational, they'd even support labor unions — which have proven the best means of giving working people a fair share of the nation's prosperity. But labor unions are almost extinct. The decline of labor unions in America tracks exactly the decline in the bottom 90 percent's share of total earnings, and the shrinkage of the middle class. In the 1950s, when the U.S. economy was growing faster than 3 percent a year, more than a third of all working Americans belonged to a union. That gave them enough bargaining clout to get wages that allowed them to buy what the economy was capable of producing. But as of 2012 only 6.6 percent of American workers in the private sector were unionized, the lowest rate of unionization in almost a century. What's to blame? Partly globalization and technological change. Globalization sent many formerly unionized jobs abroad. Technologies have replaced many formerly unionized workers in telecommunica-

tions (remember telephone operators?) and clerical jobs. But other nations subject to the same forces have far higher levels of unionization than America. Some 28 percent of Canada's workforce is unionized, as is more than 25 percent of Britain's and almost 20 percent of Germany's. Unions are almost extinct in America because we've chosen to make them extinct. Unlike other rich nations, our labor laws allow employers to replace striking workers. We've also made it exceedingly difficult for workers to organize, and we barely penalize companies that violate labor laws. (A worker who's illegally fired for trying to organize a union may, if lucky, get the job back along with back pay — after years of legal haggling.) Don't blame globalization and technological change for why employees at Walmart, America's largest employer, still don't have a union. They're not in global competition, and their jobs aren't directly threatened by technology. The average pay of a Walmart worker is \$8.81 an hour. A third of Walmart's employees work less than 28 hours per week and don't qualify for benefits. Walmart is a microcosm of the American economy. It has brazenly fought off unions. But it could easily afford to pay its workers more. It earned \$16 billion last year. Much of that sum went to Walmart's shareholders, including the family of its founder, Sam Walton. The wealth of the Walton family now exceeds the wealth of the bottom 40 percent of American families combined, according to an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute. But how can Walmart expect to continue to show fat profits when most of its customers are on a downward economic escalator? Walmart should be unionized. So should McDonald's. So should every major big-box retailer and fast-food outlet in the nation. So should every hospital in America. That way, more Americans would have enough money in their pockets to get the economy moving. And everyone — even the very rich — would benefit. As the president said, America cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it.



Robert REICH

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of "Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future." He blogs at www.robertreich.org.

ties (remember telephone operators?) and clerical jobs. But other nations subject to the same forces have far higher levels of unionization than America. Some 28 percent of Canada's workforce is unionized, as is more than 25 percent of Britain's and almost 20 percent of Germany's. Unions are almost extinct in America because we've chosen to make them extinct. Unlike other rich nations, our labor laws allow employers to replace striking workers. We've also made it exceedingly difficult for workers to organize, and we barely penalize companies that violate labor laws. (A worker who's illegally fired for trying to organize a union may, if lucky, get the job back along with back pay — after years of legal haggling.) Don't blame globalization and technological change for why employees at Walmart, America's largest employer, still don't have a union. They're not in global competition, and their jobs aren't directly threatened by technology. The average pay of a Walmart worker is \$8.81 an hour. A third of Walmart's employees work less than 28 hours per week and don't qualify for benefits. Walmart is a microcosm of the American economy. It has brazenly fought off unions. But it could easily afford to pay its workers more. It earned \$16 billion last year. Much of that sum went to Walmart's shareholders, including the family of its founder, Sam Walton. The wealth of the Walton family now exceeds the wealth of the bottom 40 percent of American families combined, according to an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute. But how can Walmart expect to continue to show fat profits when most of its customers are on a downward economic escalator? Walmart should be unionized. So should McDonald's. So should every major big-box retailer and fast-food outlet in the nation. So should every hospital in America. That way, more Americans would have enough money in their pockets to get the economy moving. And everyone — even the very rich — would benefit. As the president said, America cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it.

## Pierre Report

### Governor Signs New Tourism Tax

BY STATE SEN. TOM JONES  
D-District 17 (Viborg)

Last Thursday, Gov. Daugaard signed the bill which increases the tourism tax permanently to 1.5 per cent. This tax affects all entities that are involved with tourism during the four months of June, July, August and September. The tourism business is a bright star for South Dakotans under the guidance of Secretary of Tourism Jim Hagen. A bill that is getting a great deal of attention is HB 1087. This bill authorizes school boards to establish school sentinel programs. The bill passed in committee 8-7, then passed the entire House 42-27. It now will go to committee on the Senate side. If it passed committee, it will go to the Senate floor. Personally, if each classroom door were to automatically lock so the doors could only be opened from inside the classroom, I think would be better than more arms in schools. This is a huge emotional issue. Clear minds need to prevail. On a very positive note, the Senate Appropriations

Committee voted 8-0 to approve the construction of a sports complex on the University of South Dakota's campus. Almost all of the funding for this project is from private funds; a small percentage will be from state funds. We also passed SB 9, with an 8-0 vote, which allows the transfer of 14 acres from the University of South Dakota's Foundation to the university for an outdoor track and two soccer fields. Next week, Joint Appropriations Committee will hear requests from Labor and the Unemployment Trust Fund, the Secretary of State, the Department of Social Services, the Bureau of Finance and Management, our South Dakota Retirement System, and our Investment Council. On Thursday, the two Appropriations Committees will meet separately to listen to bill hearings. If you would like to contact me, do it at sen.jones@state.sd.us. Please remember to use your name and include where you live.



Jones

## YOUR LETTERS

### Extreme Views

**Mark Rife, Tabor**  
This is in response to William Kerr's column, "Guns: What Others Do" (*Press & Dakotan*, Jan. 31). It is in my opinion that assault type weapons, with large capacity clips, have no place in our society. Furthermore, background checks for anyone purchasing any type of firearm is the responsible thing to do. When radical views are expressed, they oftentimes backfire, and the result that these views cause are opposite of which they were intended. So, when Mr. Kerr writes in his column that he thinks all handguns should be confiscated and destroyed, he is only giving the "radical gun nuts" more ammo (pardon the pun) to bolster their extreme views. In a recent Supreme Court decision, it was made crys-

tal clear that any law-abiding citizen of the United States has a legal right to own and possess a handgun to protect themselves, their loved ones and their property. In fact, studies indicate that firearms — i.e. handguns — are used more than 2 million times a year for personal protection, and that the mere presence of a firearm, without a shot being fired, prevents crime in many instances. I cite this information from "The Armed Citizen" www.americanrifelmandot.org. I am glad our police force here in the United States is armed with more than just a night stick and we are not pestered by ladies of the evening. In closing, let me suggest, Mr. Kerr, that if you and Lois get such a warm fuzzy feeling, strolling through the streets of Germany, Belgium, France and England, may your next trip be soon and extended.

## THE VIEWS PAGE

The PRESS & DAKOTAN Views 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 to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

## OUR LETTER POLICY

The PRESS & DAKOTAN encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks 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 to views@yankton.net.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Wednesday, Feb. 6, the 37th day of 2013. There are 328 days left in the year.  
**Today's Highlight in History:** On Feb. 6, 1788, Massachusetts became the sixth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.  
**On this date:** In 1778, the United States won official recognition from France with the signing of a Treaty of Alliance in Paris. In 1899, a peace treaty between the United States and Spain was ratified by the U.S. Senate. In 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, was born in Tampico, Ill. In 1922, Cardinal Archille Ratti was elected pope; he took the name Pius XI. In 1933, the 20th Amendment to the Constitution, the so-called "lame duck" amendment, was proclaimed in effect by Secretary of State Henry Stimson. In 1943, a Los Angeles jury acquitted actor Errol Flynn of three counts of statutory rape. In 1952, Britain's King George VI died at Sandringham House in Norfolk, England; he was succeeded as monarch by his daughter, who became Queen Elizabeth II. In 1959, the United States successfully test-fired for the first time a Titan intercontinental ballistic missile from Cape Canaveral. In 1973, Dixy Lee Ray was appointed by President Richard Nixon to be the first woman to head the Atomic Energy Commission. In 1992, 16 people were killed when a C-130 military transport plane crashed in Evansville, Ind. In 1993, tennis Hall-of-Famer and human rights advocate Arthur Ashe died in New York at age 49. In 1998, President Bill Clinton signed a bill changing the name of Washington National Airport to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Pop music star Falco, who'd had a 1986 hit with "Rock Me Amadeus," died in a traffic accident in the Dominican Republic; he was 40.  
**Ten years ago:** Edging closer to war, President George W. Bush declared "the game is over" for Saddam Hussein and urged skeptical allies to join in disarming Iraq. ABC's "20/20" aired a British documentary, "Living With Michael Jackson," in which the King of Pop revealed he sometimes let children sleep in his bed.  
**Five years ago:** At least 57 deaths were reported after two days of tornadoes that plowed across Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama. The White House defended the use of the interrogation technique known as waterboarding, saying it was legal — not torture as critics argued — and had saved American lives. The Phoenix Suns acquired Shaquille O'Neal in a stunning blockbuster deal that sent four-time All-Star Shawn Marion and Marcus Banks to the Miami Heat.  
**One year ago:** The U.S. closed its embassy in Syria and Britain recalled its ambassador to Damascus in a new Western push to get President Bashar Assad to leave power and halt the murderous grind in Syria. Jeremy Lin scored a career-high 28 points in his first career start as the New York Knicks beat the Utah Jazz 99-88.  
**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Zsa Zsa Gabor is 96. Actor Patrick Macnee is 91. Actor Rip Torn is 82. Actress Marnie Van Doren is 82. Actor Mike Farrell is 74. Former NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw is 73. Singer Fabian is 70. Actress Gayle Hunnicutt is 70. Actor Michael Tucker is 69. Producer-director-writer Jim Sheridan is 64. Singer Natalie Cole is 63. Actor Jon Walmsley is 57. Actress Kathy Najimy is 56. Rock musician Simon Phillips (Toto) is 56. Actor-director Robert Townsend is 56. Actor Barry Miller is 55. Actress Megan Gallagher is 53. Rock singer Axl Rose (Guns N' Roses) is 51. Country singer Richie McDonald is 51. Singer Rick Astley is 47. Rock musician Tim Brown (Boo Radleys) is 44. Actor Brandon Hammond is 29. Actress Alice Greczyn is 27.  
**Thought for Today:** "Work is much more fun than fun." — Sir Noel Coward, British actor, dramatist and songwriter (1899-1973).

## FROM THE BIBLE

Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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