



Gun Control And Indian Country

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),
A Report of the Subcommittee On The Constitution of the Committee On The Judiciary, United States Senate, 97th Congress states: "The conclusion is thus inescapable that the history and wording of the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, as well as its interpretation by every major commentator and court in the first half-century after its ratification, indicates that what is protected is an individual right of a private citizen to own and carry firearms in a peaceful manner."

As the pundits express opposing views as to the interpretation and implementation of Second Amendment language continue to clog up the airwaves, I am reminded how difficult and complicated the issues surrounding gun control legislation can be.

Here in Indian country, it seems that the conversation regarding guns runs along the lines of not so much control but rather as to the scarcity of guns in Native communities. Gun control in Indian country means that the few who do have guns (usually hunting rifles) try to have control over who borrows their guns and who doesn't. What guns there are, are made sort of communal property subject to the use of whoever needs it at a particular time.

In Indian country, we don't have a polling system to determine how many Indian people support more stringent gun control as opposed to those who do not. With so much time and effort by Indian leadership and Native communities to ensure that poverty issues are addressed, priorities are slightly different here than off-reservation. I don't see the focus of Tribal energy being used on gun control issues that are anywhere near the urgency of national politics and politicians. Indeed, many elections of future leaders here in America are going to be decided by a large measure on a candidate's response to future gun control.

Nationally, according to a poll published in the Jan. 28 issue of Time, 49 percent of American households say they own guns while 49 percent do not. In Indian country, the numbers would be a lot different, in my opinion, because most Native people living on reservations wouldn't have the extra money it would take to purchase



Vince
TWO EAGLES

a gun. I would venture to say that a vast majority of Native homes would see gun control as a non-issue.

Additionally, this same article says that 54 percent of Americans support stricter gun control laws while 44 percent oppose. Also, 37 percent of Americans think that the primary cause of gun violence in America is due to the way parents raise their children while pop culture influences 37 percent and 23 percent is due to the availability of guns.

There were well more than 5 million firearms manufactured here in the U.S. in 2010 with an additional 3.5 million imported. Currently, according to this same article, there are an estimated 310 million firearms in U. S. civilian circulation. I don't think anyone would be in a very good position to invade our country with virtually everyone armed to the teeth, including a conventional and outstanding weapons cache, with our armed forces.

We seem to have more than enough guns in this country, but then again, how many guns is enough? There are many people I know (Indian and non-Indian) who have gotten along just fine without a gun for hunting or otherwise.

Thus, having no guns is enough for some folks while other folks who always seem to want more guns there can never be enough. Can the Constitution abide both situations, or is it merely a constitutional issue?

While 69 percent of Americans favor gun registration, 58 percent favor a ban on high-capacity clips, 56 percent support a ban on assault weapons and 52 percent favor the restriction on amount or type of ammunition one can purchase. While 54 percent favor and 45 percent oppose putting armed guards in every school, the debate goes on and on.

These poll results indicate that the majority of Americans want some control. Where are you on this matter? Now is the time to make your opinions heard because, in a few weeks, gun control will be old hat and there will be something new to take its place on the nation's political agenda.

As far as folks here in Indian country, we'll be deciding along with everyone else what the future will bring for all of us regarding gun control and other issue because we are all in this together, like it or not.

And now you know the rez of the story.
Doksha (later) ...

Pierre Report

Budget Requests Pick Up Steam

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

Monday morning (last week), we listened to budget requests from the Department of Labor, the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and the Secretary of State. The DOL reported that there are 425,000 people employed in South Dakota and 467,000 jobs available. Only 2 percent of their funding comes from the General Fund; most of its funding is federal funds. The Unemployment Trust Fund had a balance of \$51.3 million. The Secretary of State, Jason Gant, reported that South Dakota's voter turnout for our last November's election was 69 percent.

I believe the largest department, the Department of Social Services, met with us Tuesday. Their total budget for one year is \$1.2 billion. Thirty-nine percent is from the state's General Fund and 60 percent is from federal funds. A change this year in our FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) is that South Dakota is doing better financially than the nation as a whole, we will receive less federal monies. What an eye-opener for me — because our state is doing well compared to the rest of the nation, we receive less.

Gov. Daugaard recommended a 3 percent increase to providers in this year's budget proposal. That amounts to \$9,106,784. He also carried over from last year's budget \$20 million and put these monies into a reserve fund. Don't hold me to it, but I think it is proposed to carry this \$20 million over again this year as it wasn't needed. If this is true, perhaps this excess \$20 million could have been better utilized in education and assistance to our rural nursing homes. The guess of 48,000 additional eligible caused by the Affordable Health Care Act was quite a bit too many. Just an added bit of information: 69 percent of Medicaid recipients are children and 31 percent are adults.

Wednesday morning, the Bureau of Finance Management, the State Retirement System and the Investment Council met with us. It was reported that South Dakotans were the recipients of more than \$1 billion in stimulus monies. Our South Dakota Retirement System



Jones

uses 0 percent of General Fund money. Approximately 75,000 state employees are in the system. Our state employees group is an aging group. One in four employees are eligible for retirement during the next five years.

Let's talk about two great advantages we, as South Dakotans, have. The first is we live in a great place. Sure, we have some bumps along the way, but what an advantage we have over other states in raising families. The second one is our state's Investment Council. I've touted them before: They are the number ONE Investment Council in the United States. The Retirement System enjoys the benefit of our Investment Council. In 2013, its investment income is estimated to be \$607 million. In 2014, its investment income is estimated to be \$612 million. The total monies managed by this council are \$10.5 billion. Matt Clark heads the council. My hat is off to him and his staff. He explained that each of his staff needs 10 years to be as proficient as they can be. Each staff member is closely monitored during this time period.

Thursday, we listened to Senate bill presentations. A few of them included construction of swine teaching and research facilities at SDSU and the construction of an indoor practice and human performance facility at SDSU. No state funds will be used in either project. We also unanimously passed an appropriation to refund certain taxes for elderly persons and persons with a disability. We deferred to a later date provisions regarding state aid to special education: a request for ongoing funding for Teach for America in the amount of \$500,000; and an appropriation to rehabilitate a section of rail line to the tune of \$5,000,000.

Next week, if time and space allows, I'd like to give you some information I have on the Medicaid issue.

If you would like to contact me with your concerns, issues and/or information, please contact me at sen.jones@state.sd.us. Remember to include your name and address.

America. I'M CONFUSED.

Kerr further states: "... children being killed with a machine gun-like assault weapon available in half of our Wal-Mart stores ..." Not sure what Wal-Mart store he shops in but buying firearms like machine guns haven't been for sale to private individuals since the National Firearms Act of 1934 came to be. I'M CONFUSED.

He further states "... it may take quite a few years to get the vast majority of the estimated 300,000,000 unregistered handguns into the hands of the police and destroyed. If the guns are unregistered, how do you know how many there are? I'M CONFUSED.

He supports registration of shotguns and rifles and the banning of handguns ... this from a man who fought in World War II, liberating a country whose leaders, among other nasty things, banned the private ownership of firearms. I'M REALLY CONFUSED!

As for that hooker chasing him down the street in Paris ... well, that's for another letter.

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Population Trends: Our Economic Future

Yankton's economic future is about more — and reliant on more — than simply Yankton.

That was one takeaway from a presentation Monday by Dr. Sidney Goss of the South Dakota School of Mines. He was the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of Yankton Area Progressive Growth (YAPG), a group that — as the name implies — is devoted to cultivating the economic fitness of the vicinity.

Goss brought an excellent perspective to the proceedings. He is an expert at analyzing census data, and he looks at trends and produces projections that can pinpoint areas of concern for a state, a county or a community.

And the population trend lines that impact the Yankton area deserve the attention of local officials, and not just from Yankton.

During the past decade, the population of Yankton County grew modestly, which is good news for local businesses and the labor force from which they hire.

However, the population in the Yankton area labor shed, which covers about seven surrounding counties, decreased during that same time period. That creates a concern about whether there will be enough of a workforce available to fill area jobs and, thus, facilitate economic growth.

The Yankton area is far from alone. As several PowerPoint slides presented by Goss indicated, population loss is epidemic across the midsection of the country.

The notable islands of growth in South Dakota include the Interstate 29 corridor, the Black Hills area, any county with a city (such as Yankton) and the reservations. Beyond that, there is a dwindling reservoir of warm bodies, of opportunities and, eventually, of hope.

This is the threat that haunts so many towns and so many dreams in rural areas such as ours.

But there is always hope, which was not only a point in Goss's presentation but also the message that emanated from the YAPG meeting.

Economic development is an answer to many of the ills that plague rural communities. It creates opportunity, it draws workers, it attracts customers, it generates revenue and it creates a reason for someone to move to that community or area.

But it's far easier said than done, of course.

YAPG presents an example of a positive impact. It has completed one successful fundraising campaign and is moving forward strongly with another. That bodes well for this community — and, in effect, for the communities that surround us.

The YAPG's new campaign, YES2, is the next step in finding solutions to those nagging population problems. The new campaign is already generating strong support and looking for more. It will pay dividends for everyone. More than that, it will cultivate more opportunities.

Yankton is fortunate to have an aggressive organization like YAPG working for it. And again, the surrounding towns and counties that make up that regional labor shed also benefit from YAPG's work.

But it's an ongoing struggle, just as a dwindling population (as well as a graying one) is an ongoing concern for communities all across the Great Plains. Goss's presentation made that clear. The venue at which he made it, however, also made it clear that we can battle the trend and work to reverse it.

kmh

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 Ash Wednesday, Feb. 13, the 44th day of 2013. There are 321 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 13, 1943, during World War II, the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve was officially established.

On this date: In 1542, the fifth wife of England's King Henry VIII, Catherine Howard, was executed for adultery.

In 1741, Andrew Bradford of Pennsylvania published the first American magazine, "The American Magazine, or A Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies" lasted three issues.

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln was officially declared winner of the 1860 presidential election as electors cast their ballots.

In 1920, the League of Nations recognized the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland.

In 1933, the Warsaw Convention, governing airlines' liability for international carriage of persons, luggage and goods, went into effect.

In 1935, a jury in Flemington, N.J. found Bruno Richard Hauptmann guilty of first-degree murder in the kidnap-slaying of the son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh. (Hauptmann was later executed.)

In 1945, during World War II, Allied planes began bombing the German city of Dresden. The Soviets captured Budapest, Hungary, from the Germans.

In 1960, France exploded its first atomic bomb in the Sahara Desert.

In 1972, the 11th Winter Olympics ended in Sapporo, Japan.

In 1980, the 13th Winter Olympics opened in Lake Placid, N.Y.

In 1988, the 15th winter Olympics opened in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

In 1991, during Operation Desert Storm, allied warplanes destroyed an underground shelter in Baghdad that had been identified as a military command center; Iraqi officials said 500 civilians were killed.

Ten years ago: Clara Harris, who'd run down her husband, David, with her Mercedes after catching him with his mistress, was convicted by a Houston jury of murder

despite her claim that she'd hit him accidentally while in a heartick daze. (Harris was sentenced to 20 years in prison.) A U.S. government plane carrying four Americans and a Colombian went down in rebel territory in southern Colombia; the executed bodies of an American and the Colombian were found in the wreckage (the other three Americans were held by rebels until they were rescued in July 2008). Walt W. Rostow, an adviser to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, died in Austin, Texas, at age 86.

Five years ago: Under oath and sometimes blistering questioning, seven-time Cy Young Award winner Roger Clemens told Congress: "I have never taken steroids or HGH." Hollywood writers ended their 100-day strike that had disrupted the TV season and canceled awards shows. Japanese movie director Kon Ichikawa died in Tokyo at age 92.

One year ago: President Barack Obama unveiled a record \$3.8 trillion election-year budget plan, calling for stimulus-style spending on roads and schools and tax hikes on the wealthy to help pay the costs. Gov. Chris Gregoire signed into law a measure making Washington state the seventh to legalize same-sex marriage.

Today's Birthdays: U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager (ret.) is 90. Actress Kim Novak is 80. Actor George Segal is 79. Actress Carol Lynley is 71. Singer-musician Peter Dinklage (The Monkees) is 71. Actress Stockard Channing is 69. Talk show host Jerry Springer is 69. Actor Bo Svenson is 69. Singer Peter Gabriel is 63. Actor David Naughton is 62. Rock musician Peter Hook is 57. Actor Matt Salinger is 53. Singer Henry Rollins is 52. Actor Neal McDonough is 47. Singer Freedom Williams is 47. Actress Kelly Hu is 45. Rock musician Todd Harrell (3 Doors Down) is 41. Singer Robbie Williams is 39. Singer-songwriter Feist is 37. Rhythm-and-blues performer Natalie Stewart is 34. Actress Mena Suvari is 34.

Thought for Today: "It is not so much what we have done amiss, as what we have left undone, that will trouble us, looking back." — Ellen Wood, English playwright and journalist (1813-1887).

FROM THE BIBLE

I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Matthew 10:16.
Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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