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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

Abortion Waiting Period Fine As Is

ARGUS LEADER, Sioux Falls (Feb. 18): Some South Dakota lawmakers support a bill that would essentially extend the time that women must wait before having an abortion. South Dakota law already requires a 72-hour waiting period before an abortion. Now some representatives want to exclude weekends and holidays in that waiting period.

What an insult to women. The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Raids, has passed the full House.

South Dakota already has a conservative law that does an unusually good job of balance when it comes to women seeking a legal abortion. There is no clamor that indicates women have not been able to seek and receive the counseling that is mandated under the 72-hour waiting period. There is no reason for this latest proposed requirement other than what appears to be an attempt to backhandedly control the rights of women.

It is fine for a lawmaker to be against abortion as an option. But legislative power should not be used to grandstand and chip away at the legal right to an abortion by challenging whether women can get adequate counseling if weekends and holidays are included in the 72-hour waiting period.

We send lawmakers to Pierre to represent their constituency, to come together on key issues that make life better in South Dakota. We don't send them to Pierre to keep tinkering with a law until it fits their own personal agenda.

We urge lawmakers to drop the extended wait idea and get to other matters for the good of our state.

Johanns Turns The Page

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD (Feb. 19): Nebraskans today can thank Mike Johanns for three decades of public service.

His decision not to seek re-election next year will close another chapter in a political career that began with his election as a Lancaster County commissioner in 1983. He served on the Lincoln City Council, twice was elected the capital city's mayor, twice was elected governor, served as U.S. secretary of agriculture and won election to the U.S. Senate.

That resumé alone is impressive. But the work Johanns did for his community, state and country is impressive, too. The common-sense conservatism displayed steadiness, energy, sound judgment and competence in every office he has held.

During tight budgetary times, Gov. Johanns made clear his determination that the state maintain fiscal discipline. He showed statewide vision as his administration helped develop strategic policy to address Nebraska's water needs and pushed for community-based reform of the state's behavioral health system.

After President George W. Bush called Johanns to Washington, congressional Democrats and Republicans recognized him as a capable Cabinet officer, while abroad he earned a reputation as a knowledgeable and skilled trade negotiator. As a senator, he has been a member of the bipartisan "Gang of Eight" seeking solutions to the nation's fiscal problems.

Johanns and his wife, Stephanie, said that in looking ahead, "We want a quieter time with our focus on each other, our family and our faith."

There will be time to reflect more fully on his career, but for now congratulations are in order. After 30 years of service to his fellow Nebraskans, Mike Johanns has earned it.

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The President's Big Con

BY BILL O'REILLY
Creators Syndicate

Please listen up. We are all being conned by the Obama administration. This year, the American taxpayer will fork over about \$571 billion to pay for educating children in the nation's public schools. All told, the country spends close to \$16,000 per student every year on primary through college education. That's the highest per-student spending rate in the world.

However, according to President Obama, it's not enough. He wants more tax dollars, especially for "early education." He said so in his State of the Union address, and it drew big-time applause from his crew. Of course we need to spend more on education. And anyone who opposes that hates kids!

The centerpiece of the president's early-education vision is the "Head Start" program, which has been in place since 1965. Over the past 48 years, the feds have spent close to \$200 billion on Head Start. But there's one big problem: The program is not working.

According to a recent study by the Department of Health and Human Services, by the end of third grade, Head Start children remain academically disadvantaged compared to their same-age peers. So why did the president not mention that? Why is he still pounding the drum for more funding for a program that is not cutting it?

The answer is social engineering. Obama will not say this, but one of his devoted followers, Columbia University professor Joseph Stiglitz, will. What the left really wants is to redistribute income through the public education system.

In a recent *New York Times* column, Stiglitz called for the following:

- More spending on preschool education.
- More spending on before- and after-class programs.
- More entitlements to ensure that pregnant women



Bill O'REILLY

are protected from "environmental hazards." That means increased payments to prospective moms for better food, housing and medical care.

And the topper:
• Direct cash payments to parents of poor children who make sure their kids participate in school programs and show up for class. If that ever comes to be, America essentially will be paying parents to parent.

It is all about control. Obama believes the deck in America is stacked against the poor and wants to get lower-income citizens as much cash and as many entitlements as he can. Masking those payments under "more money for education" is a clever way to do that.

It is certainly true that poor children have a much tougher academic road than affluent kids. And smart educational policy can close that gap. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush told me the reason Head Start is not delivering is that it doesn't concentrate enough on reading. In many school districts, it is primarily a babysitting service.

As a former high school teacher and a student in a class of 60 orphans at St. Brigid's grammar school, I know that education is all about discipline and motivation. Disadvantaged students need extra attention, a stable school environment and enough teacher creativity to stimulate their imaginations. Those things are not expensive.

But that's not all of what federal education spending is about, is it? It's also about redistributing income. We are being conned big time. And it's the kids who suffer the most because of it.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."

Here's A Different Drone Issue

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — First they came for the drones. No, not the unmanned kind that kill strangers from a safe distance but the sort who sit in meeting rooms and repeat slogans until they absorb the proper way of thinking. The killers, figuratively speaking, are the diversity trainers who numb the human mind with slogans and rote instruction on emotional correctness.

Would that it were unnecessary to say "figuratively speaking," but in an era when fundamentalist literalism is on the rise, it is always necessary to be perfectly, perfectly clear. Signal: The following may include exaggerations, sarcasm and, possibly, snark, all intended to make life somewhat more bearable.

Then again, hyperbole is superfluous when real life is so absurdly over the top. Thanks to Judicial Watch, the conservative-leaning watchdog group, and The Daily Caller, we recently have learned about the United States Department of Agriculture's magical diversity training programs, i.e. "professional development opportunities," wherein employees learn how they ought really to "think" about things. Lessons include such angst-inspiring tropes as the U.S. has destroyed other nations, we all commit sins of discrimination, and America should repent and stop being so proud of itself.

More or less. One does not have to be a flag-waving, uber-patriot to find this sort of mind-training repugnant, though watching clips of the USDA sessions might help one better understand the recent rush to collect ammunition. (Ahem: I am merely making an observation here, not suggesting behaviors that some might find troubling or offensive; one wishes it were unnecessary to say.)

The sessions recently highlighted are not new. Most corporate employees — and all American students — have been exposed to this wee-minded busy-ness. More than a decade ago, I wrote that the demise of newspapers was owing more to the Human Resources Department than to the explosion of the Internet. The "tidy-desk memo mentality" of management bean-counters began killing newspapers long before pajama-clad bloggers began mastering hyperlinks.

Once you kill the spirit, the rest is a matter of decompensation.

Exhibit A this go-round is sensitivity trainer Samuel Betances of Souder, Betances and Associates, who appears in clips culled from a 3.5-hour "Cultural Sensitivity

Training" session that have been featured prominently in conservative media in recent days. As detailed by Caroline May at The Daily Caller, Betances leads a group through a process of self-enlightenment. (See sarcasm note above.)

"I want you to say: 'If we work for a federal agency,' Say that. (Audience repeats) 'We have discriminated in the past.' (Audience repeats) Say: 'Every federal agency,' (Audience repeats) 'has discriminated against African-Americans,' (Audience repeats) 'Hispanics,' (Audience repeats) 'Native American Indians,' (Audience repeats) and other groups' (Audience repeats)," Betances preaches.

In other clips, Betances regales his audience with a little history lesson. Not only did the U.S. steal the lands that are increasingly being populated by illegal immigrants (Texas, California, Arizona) — hence, implicitly, they have a right to re-occupy — but America's founding fathers took their governing cues from Native Americans. Oh, and they stole their symbol, too — the bald eagle.

Well, gosh, I feel so bad about all this that I'd like to cede the lower U.S. to Mexico and adopt the chicken as the national symbol.

There's no end to the ways by which nations can make recompense to those whose fates were altered by history. Shouldn't we all just pack up and return whence we came?

This is, of course, emotional extortion designed to engineer behavior while enriching people who have invented an industry around the notion that people can be numbed into niceness and, therefore, more easily managed. It is helpful to recall that drones are also stingless bees.

There was a time when such lessons, otherwise known as manners, were taught in every American home. Said homes were not privileged in most cases but they were occupied by a mother and father who, though they perhaps did not adore each other every waking moment, were at least committed to the mutual task of rearing thoughtful, well-behaved children.

Sensitivity training, alas, is one of the many legacies of our sundering of the family, which has led necessarily to greater dependence on third parties to instruct and order. We are unlikely to hear much about that in the next government diversity seminar and, soon enough, there will be none left to recognize that there is something wrong with this picture.

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Kathleen PARKER

YOUR LETTERS

A Better Approach

Charles Snyder, Apple Valley, Minn.

The need for USPS to cut service back to five days a week is understandable. But, there is little rationale for suspending service on Saturday. The one advantage that I see goes to the postal workers, granting them two consecutive days off per week. Yearly, USPS observes five holidays on Monday, so there will be a minimum of five occurrences of three consecutive non-delivery days per year.

The optimal approach, making the closure day least disruptive, would be to move it to the middle of

the week. If Wednesday were chosen, there would never be three successive closing days. Thanksgiving is our only fixed mid-week holiday, so that would result in only one for sure instance of two consecutive non-delivery days per year, with additional two-day closings depending upon where the other holidays fall. For 2014, there would be four two-day closings because New Years falls on Tuesday, Independence Day on Thursday and Christmas on Wednesday. Whereas for 2014, for Saturday closures, there will be six occurrences of three consecutive days of no mail delivery along with 46 two-day periods absent of mail.

FROM THE BIBLE

The birds of the air come and make nests in its branches. Matthew 13:32. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis