

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

Open Government And Changing Times

Changing times require changing rules to fit those times. It's simple logic that also applies to how government operates. That's why House Bill 1153 currently moving through the South Dakota Legislature is a logical law that needs to be embraced.

This bill would expand the definitions of public access to government business, it would expand to also include certain emails, texts and other forms of electronic communication as documentation that must adhere to open meeting regulations. Some of these communications must also be archived for public inspection.

What this means is that electronic communications between members of public boards should not always be beyond public reach. Increasingly, board members are communicating with one another in just such a fashion — just like the rest of society — and HB1153 attempts to include those modern lines of communication under existing laws requiring governmental transparency.

The idea for the law is not new. According to the South Dakota Newspaper Association (SDNA), such legislation was originally introduced in Pierre in 2013 as one of the recommendations of the Open Government Task Force convened the previous year by Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Attorney General Marty Jackley. The SDNA notes that the task force "identified the issue of public boards conducting official business via email or other electronic means as an important open government issue."

The law doesn't govern every email and text message sent from one board member to another, for instance. Rather, HB1153 would apply to electronic missives only in situations in which a quorum of a board is dealing with public business. It would not cover any other electronic communications of public officials. The SDNA offers this example: The law would not cover "administrative or clerical-type email(s)," such as a school superintendent emailing school board members about the dates for a meeting, but it would apply to cases in which a superintendent asks board members to offer "input on a policy issue that results in responses from a legal quorum of board members." This situation in effect constitutes an official meeting or public dialogue, and should be subject to open inspection.

With electronic communication now so ubiquitous in our society on various levels, it makes sense that legal parameters such as our open meetings laws should be expanded to embrace these new horizons. HB1153, which was approved by the House Local Government Committee last week, is scheduled to be considered by the full House today. It deserves passage.

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ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Should clothing be exempt from the state sales tax?
No.....53%
Yes.....44%
Not sure.....3%
TOTAL VOTES CAST.....311

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you think the case involving the death of Tammy Haas will ever be solved?
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, Feb. 24, the 55th day of 2015. There are 310 days left in the year.
Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 24, 1975, the Congressional Budget Office, charged with providing independent analyses of budgetary and economic issues, began operating under its first director, Alice Rivlin.
On this date: In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII issued an edict outlining his calendar reforms. (The Gregorian Calendar is the calendar in general use today.)
In 1803, in its Marbury v. Madison decision, the Supreme Court established judicial review of the constitutionality of statutes.
In 1815, American engineer and inventor Robert Fulton, credited with building the first successful commercial steamboat, died in New York at 49.
In 1864, the first Union prisoners arrived at the Confederates' Andersonville prison camp in Georgia.
In 1868, the U.S. House of Representatives impeached President Andrew Johnson following his attempted dismissal of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton; Johnson was later acquitted by the Senate.
In 1912, the American Jewish women's organization Hadassah was founded in New York City.
In 1920, the German Workers Party, which later became the Nazi Party, met in Munich to adopt its platform.
In 1938, the first nylon bristle toothbrush, manufactured by DuPont under the name "Dr. West's Miracle Toothbrush," went on sale.
In 1946, Argentinian men went to the polls to elect Juan D. Peron their president.
In 1955, the Cole Porter musical "Silk Stockings" opened at the Imperial Theater on Broadway.
In 1988, in a ruling that expanded legal protections for parody and satire, the Supreme Court unanimously overturned a \$150,000 award that the Rev. Jerry Falwell had won against Hustler magazine and publisher Larry Flynt.
In 1990, magazine publisher Malcolm Forbes died in Far Hills, New Jersey, at age 70. Fifties balladeer Johnnie Ray died in Los Angeles at age 63.

Ten years ago: Pope John Paul II underwent an operation to insert a tube in his throat to relieve breathing problems, hours after being rushed to the hospital for the second time in a month with flu-like symptoms.

Five years ago: Testifying before Congress, Toyota CEO Akio Toyoda apologized personally and repeatedly to the United States and millions of American Toyota owners for safety lapses that had led to deaths and widespread recalls. Trainer Dawn Brancheau was dragged to her death by a killer whale, Tilikum, at SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida.

One year ago: Despite Western pressure, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni signed an anti-gay bill that punished gay sex with up to life in prison. Writer-director-actor Harold Ramis, 69, died in Glencoe, Illinois. "Late Night with Seth Meyers" premiered on NBC.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Abe Vigoda is 94. Actor Steven Hill is 93. Actress Eriq La Salle is 88. Actor-singer Dominic Chianese is 84. Movie composer Michel Legrand is 83. Opera singer-director Renata Scotta is 81. Singer Joanie Sommers is 74. Former Sen. Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., is 73. Actor Barry Bostwick is 70. Actor Edward James Olmos is 68. Singer-writer-producer Rupert Holmes is 68. Rock singer-musician George Thorogood is 65. Actress Debra Jo Rupp is 64. Actress Helen Shaver is 64. News anchor Paula Zahn is 59. Baseball Hall of Famer Eddie Murray is 59. Country singer Sammy Kershaw is 57. Actor Mark Moses is 57. Singer Michelle Shocked is 53. Movie director Todd Field is 51. Actor Billy Zane is 49. Actress Bonnie Somerville is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer Brandon Brown (Mista) is 32. Rock musician Matt McGinley (Gym Class Hero) is 32. Actor Wilson Bethel is 31. Actor Alexander Koch (TV: "Under the Dome") is 27.

Thought for Today: "The house of every one is to him as his castle and fortress, as well for his defence against injury and violence as for his repose." — Sir Edward Coke, English jurist (1552-1634).

FROM THE BIBLE

[David said to the Philistine,] "I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." 1 Samuel 17:45. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gracious Act!

Doug Sorensen, Brookings
Referee in Chief, South Dakota Amateur Hockey Association
As a longtime hockey referee and the state supervisor of officials, I've seen and heard a lot of things that have made me understand why hockey can have a bad reputation.
On Feb. 22, I was lucky enough to witness an act that I thought I'd share with you.
The Yankton Miracle played for third place at the South Dakota Amateur Hockey Association's PeeWee B State Tournament in Sioux Center, Iowa. After a well-contested game that went to a fourth overtime, the Miracle won the game. After presenting the awards, I was leaving the locker room area and walked out behind a couple of Miracle players, who

stepped into the lobby area of the arena into a tunnel of their parents and other fans from Yankton. The fans gave their players a nice round of applause — a fitting gesture for team that played hard throughout the weekend.
But the real reason for my letter is what happened next: The door opened again, and several Sioux Falls players entered the same tunnel. These kids, who also played their hearts out, were greeted with the same round of applause that the Yankton kids received! This gracious act by the Yankton fans was truly what youth sports is supposed to be about.

The Yankton parents and fans deserve to be commended for this behavior, and I feel they represented your community in an exceptional way, and made me proud to be involved in youth hockey in South Dakota.



The Rez Of The Story

A Sense Of Community

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), "The life of the community, both domestically and internationally, clearly demonstrates that respect for rights, and the guarantees that follow from them, are measures of the common good that serve to evaluate the relationship between justice and injustice, development and poverty, security and conflict." — Pope Benedict XVI.

Recent events that have unfolded in Rapid City concerning the ill treatment of Native children by non-Natives is, of course, extremely disconcerting and more than a little disturbing. To say that policies and laws that govern the common security and safety of the citizens of Rapid City has been compromised and the unspoken covenant between citizens to treat each other with respect and kindness was ostensibly breached is an understatement.

It is quite apparent that Rapid City is a community suffering from the ills of racial conflict marked by mistrust, anger and resentment — some will say, what else is new? While we may be shocked at the outright brutality of such acts, are we really surprised? Really? To put it another way, Rapid City has "earned" the reputation among many Native people as an unsafe place to travel or live—meaning that being mistreated by many local non-Indians is expected. Do Rapid City residents want the general public to fear coming to their city? I sincerely believe that this is not the case. I think that the vast majority of RC's citizens want to live in a peaceful community where cooperation and forming coalitions to address community issues are the rule rather than the exception, don't you?

Haile Selassie, who was Emperor of Ethiopia between 1930 and 1974 once remarked: "We must become bigger than we have been; more courageous, greater in spirit, larger in outlook. We must become members of a new race, overcoming petty prejudice, owing out ultimate allegiance not to nation but to our fellow men within the human community."
What do we owe each other? We owe each other the respect to listen and to pay atten-



Vince TWO EAGLES

tion to what is not said as much as what is said. It takes large amounts of courage and compassion to listen to others sometimes because what they have to say is not comfortable to hear. This doesn't mean that we default to angry rhetoric and then expect others to give us the time we seek to tell our stories. That being said, if we want to see change in our communities, we have to engage all opinions and all suggestions for that change. Change comes from concerted effort by everyone in the community and it takes time and patience.

How would our community look if it were healthy? What would be some indicators? For one thing there would be forums for open and honest dialogue between citizens. Talking circles where issues could be discussed with an eye toward relationship building and action steps toward the change folks need.

I call upon all citizens of South Dakota to support the community of Rapid City in their time of dire need to reconcile the past, heal in the present and collectively prepare for the future. How will our communities handle situations like the attacking of children of color who, as I have already said, belong to all of us. We are all the village needed to raise our children as responsible, compassionate citizens of tomorrow. Those who choose to not follow our community's rules had best beware of the consequences and prepare to pay the price for their transgressions. To those of us who live here, lets talk with one another so we can discover how best to move forward to that place that assures the safety of our children from the insanity of drunken idiotic behavior of our own.

Through conversation, we can find paths to compromise which is the antidote to the zero sum situation we find ourselves here in South Dakota between Native and non-Native people. Remember, conversation in my opinion is only the beginning. Working together to find common-ground answers is success and as they saying goes, "nothing succeeds like success."

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

Jon Stewart Kept Me Sane

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

I am not insane. For this, I have Jon Stewart to thank.

Thirteen years ago, it felt like I was in a front row seat on the express train to Crazy Town. That, you will recall, is when the wheels began to come off the Bush administration's argument for invading Iraq, i.e., to find the weapons of mass destruction. But of course, there were no such weapons, an inconvenient truth to which Team Bush responded with a new, after-the-fact rationale. Now, the argument for war was and always had been the need to free the poor, suffering Iraqi people.

By itself, this steaming load of cattle waste and the smarmy self-righteousness with which it was dumped was enough to make me wander the streets muttering to myself. But what really made my brain simmer in its own juices, what really made the steam build inside my skull, was the way the American people responded to the tacit assumption that we were a bunch of compliant dopes too stupid to care that we had been baited and switched into the biggest foreign policy debacle of the last 40 years.

Namely, by proving ourselves a bunch of compliant dopes too stupid to care that we had been baited and switched into the biggest foreign policy debacle of the last 40 years. America shrugged, better than half of us telling pollsters the war was justified whether WMDs were found or not.

It made me want to holler, made me want to stop random people and shake them by the shoulders.

Then my friend Bruce tells me about this news parody program called "The Daily Show," hosted by this guy named Jon Stewart and says I really ought to watch. So I do. And I feel encroaching insanity rolling back, borne off on the simple, soul-saving realization that somebody else Gets It.

Jon Stewart is why I'm not crazy. With his recent announcement that he will be leaving the show this year, I figure now is the time for a thank you long overdue.

No, Stewart did not invent fake news. "Saturday Night Live" got there decades before him with its Weekend Update segment. But

where "SNL" and others approached the news with ironic detachment, Stewart alone climbed into the pit and wrestled with it. His innovation was simply his willingness to be outraged, to be an informed, intelligent and decent man unable — or, perhaps, unwilling — to close his eyes and anesthetize his soul to the hypocrisies, distortions, inanities and steaming loads of cattle waste the news too often brings.

Though his worldview was unabashedly liberal, Stewart's only true loyalty was to his own everyman sense of right and wrong. So he went after Team Obama for its drone diplomacy, domestic spying and failure to provide timely healthcare to veterans with a ferocity that rendered foolish all those folks who predicted he'd run out of material once Bush left office. His show was a rare television platform for authors selling weighty tomes on difficult topics. He rendered the financial meltdown comprehensible. He skewered Fox with its own words and CNN with its own holograms.

And he did it all with a potty mouth and a razor wit.

We tend to underestimate humor, but it has this way of clarifying that which is difficult and opaque. You can often make a more trenchant point with a joke than with a 10,000-word treatise, something Stewart proved night in and night out. For my money, he is the news media's moral center, a Cronkite for the new millennium.

Yes, that's a lofty role to ascribe a night-club comic, but I stand by it. I don't think I'd have gotten through the madness of the last 13 years — death panels and tea parties and Ferguson, oh my! — without him.

People are asking who his replacement will be. They needn't bother. Yes, someone else will eventually sit in the chair and spin jokes off the news, but Stewart won't be replaced. Can't be.

And I can feel myself getting a little crazier already.

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