

# The Press & Dakotan

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**OPINION OTHER VIEWS**

## Well, At Least We Beat Mississippi ...

**CAPITAL JOURNAL, Pierre (July 9):** Some Southerners tell us there's a saying down South when some of those states show up poorly on lists that reflect poorly on measures of quality of life: "Thank God for Mississippi." That's a wry observation that poor Mississippi could usually be counted on to perform worse than everyone else.

Another of those lists has been released recently, and South Dakota is in the odd place of saying: Thank God for Montana, California, Vermont, West Virginia, Maine, Oregon and Hawaii. We can be grateful for them because we were ranked No. 8 on a list that ranked the 10 worst states to make a living in 2015, according to an analysis by MoneyRates.com, and all of those states ranked worse than we did. Hawaii ranked worst of all.

This list appears to be a straightforward attempt at crunching five streams of data: average wages; state tax rates; cost of living; unemployment rates; and workplace incidents of illness, injuries and fatalities.

MoneyRates.com's analysis, comparing South Dakota to neighboring Montana, puts a finger on why we rank poorly: "This is another state where low unemployment — in this case just 3.6 percent — does not seem to be translating into higher wages. The average wage in South Dakota is even lower than in Montana, though having no state income tax and a better record for workplace safety allow South Dakota to fare slightly better in these rankings than Montana."

That explanation should give us pause. What's the sense of crowing about our low unemployment if all we can offer people eager to fill up some of our South Dakota jobs is an average income of \$37,300? South Dakotans have legitimately taken comfort that in the boom-and-bust flow of past economic cycles, we haven't seen the highs or the lows that other parts of the country experience. That's what we tell ourselves, but it's only partially true.

Where income is the measure, we do hit bottom. Well, almost. The data say that only one other state in the whole country does worse than South Dakota — Mississippi. That state is the absolute worst in average income at \$36,750.

Let's face it: We do poorly on this list because average income is poor. Maybe ordinary Joes and Janets worry about that more than politicians do. Maybe that's what South Dakota voters sensed when they approved a minimum wage hike on last year's general election ballot. That doesn't mean our governor and our Legislature couldn't do more. Nobody wants to rank this low in average income, or in a list of the worst states in which to make a living.

In the meantime, thank God for Mississippi.

### OUR 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/.

### IN HISTORY

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Monday, July 20, the 201st day of 2015. There are 164 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On July 20, 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon after reaching the surface in their Apollo 11 lunar module.

**On this date:** In 1861, the Congress of the Confederate States convened in Richmond, Virginia.

In 1871, British Columbia entered Confederation as a Canadian province.

In 1917, the World War I draft lottery went into operation.

In 1923, Mexican revolutionary leader Pancho Villa was assassinated by gunmen in Parral.

In 1944, an attempt by a group of German officials to assassinate Adolf Hitler with a bomb failed as the explosion only wounded the Nazi leader. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated for a fourth term of office at the Democratic convention in Chicago.

In 1954, the Geneva Accords divided Vietnam into northern and southern entities.

In 1965, the Bob Dylan single "Like a Rolling Stone" was released by Columbia Records.

In 1968, the first International Special Olympics Summer Games, organized by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, were held at Soldier Field in Chicago.

In 1976, America's Viking 1 robot spacecraft made a successful, first-ever landing on Mars.

In 1989, Burmese activist Aung San Suu Kyi (soo chee) was placed under house arrest by the military government of Myanmar.

In 1990, Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, one of the court's most liberal voices, announced he was stepping down.

In 2012, a gunman opened fire inside a crowded movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, during a midnight showing of "The Dark Knight Rises," killing 12 people. (Defendant James Eagen Holmes has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity to more than 160 counts of murder and attempted murder.)

**Ten years ago:** A day after being tapped by President George W. Bush, Supreme Court nominee John Roberts paid courtesy calls on senators while a conservative group purchased TV ad time in support of his nomination and abortion rights groups staged protests.

### FROM THE BIBLE

*He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing. Zephaniah 3:17. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Passing Judgments

**Debora Schmidt, Yankton**  
This is in response to Kim Dale's on same-sex marriage (*Press & Dakotan*, July 7):

I realize everyone has the right to free speech. I also have enough common sense to know as my mother and grandmother taught me, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." It would have been a good idea if others

would do the same.

You do realize that calling gay marriage an "atrocity" and telling them to "quietly get married or live together and shut up about their sex life" is probably what the definition of homophobic is. Please read the original article and get your facts straight before your venom starts flying. Kaitlin did not say "she knows that we'll all accept it." What she stated was a hope that it would be easier for people to start accepting (LGBT individuals) because



### Capitol Notebook

## Pick Your Adjective For The '16 Ballot

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE – Direct democracy is budding again in South Dakota. Voters face three measures on the 2016 statewide ballot. But there could be 10 or more.

The decline of Democrats and dominance by Republicans in legislative elections are fueling some of this.

But four potential measures come straight from people who believe in marijuana.

One petition would legalize medical marijuana. Another would de-criminalize possession of one ounce or less of marijuana.

Two related petitions seek new prohibitions against tobacco and alcohol. Tobacco and alcohol would become illegal like marijuana is.

The circulators are asking voters for consistent treatment.

All four would seem to have a fair chance to make the ballot. It seems unlikely any has a fair chance of victory, based on past election results in South Dakota.

Then there is the fight between those who support "fair" lending and those who support "responsible" lending.

The two main committees in this fight use those two adjectives to distinguish their sides.

The "responsible" group wants to cap payday and title loans at an annual maximum of 36 percent interest and fees.

The "fair" group wants to continue without a limit because they deal with high-risk customers.

Together those two adjectives prompt a head-scratching question: What is fair or responsible about even 36 percent interest and fees?

Four measures deal with politics. Two laws passed by largely Republicans in the 2015 legislative session have already been referred to the 2016 ballot.

### Michelle Malkin

## The Jihad Against Our Troops

BY MICHELLE MALKIN  
Creators.com

Four U.S. Marines, barred from carrying weapons at naval training facilities despite explicit ISIS threats against our military, are dead in Tennessee.

Another service member and a Chattanooga police officer survived gunshots after Thursday's two-stage massacre allegedly at the hands of 24-year-old jihadist Muhammad Youssef Abdulazez.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus called the terrorist's spree "insidious and unfathomable." President Obama bemoaned the "heartbreaking circumstance" in which the murdered Marines found themselves.

"Unfathomable"? Not if you've been paying attention. Islam-inspired hate crimes against our troops have continued unabated since the Obama White House first dismissed the 2009 Fort Hood massacre as "workplace violence."

Here's what's unfathomable: While the social justice warriors in Washington bend over backward to appease CAIR and Muslim civil rights absolutists, Americans in uniform are dying on American soil at the hands of Allah's homicidal avengers – but the commander in chief couldn't even bother to deliver a live statement to the nation yesterday about the bloodshed.

Instead, Obama issued another bland, bloodless pronouncement about the assassinations of our disarmed troops.

"Heartbreaking circumstance"? Lightning strikes are random events of unfortunate circumstance.

The concerted attacks and plots against our troops in their recruitment centers and on their bases here at home are outrageous acts of war.

Have you forgotten?

In June 2009, Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad walked into an Arkansas Army recruiting center, murdered 24-year-old Pvt. William Long and gravely wounded 18-year-old Pvt. Quinton Ezeagwala. He had planned on killing many more in the name of Allah. While the White House and media decry the "climate of hate" fostered by Christians, they whitewashed Muhammad's jihadi rage. Muhammad received a life sentence without parole for the act he himself described as a "jihadi attack on infidel forces."

It should be noted that Muhammad converted to Islam at Tennessee State University in Nashville and then became further radicalized in Yemen before returning to the U.S.

"The U.S. has to pay for the rape, murder, bloodshed, blasphemy it has done and still doing to the Muslims and Islam," Muhammad railed after carrying out his plot. "So consider this a small retaliation the best is to come Allah willing. This is not the first attack and won't be the last."

As I noted at the time, Obama could barely muster up a limp written statement expressing "sadness" over what he described as a "senseless act of

violence" (instead of the intentional systematic act of Islamic terrorism that it was).

After the Little Rock ambush came the Baltimore military recruitment center bomb plot. Muslim convert Muhammad Hussain, 21, bragged on Facebook about his devotion to violent jihad. He "dialed a cellphone that he believed would ignite barrels of explosives packed into a sport utility vehicle," the *Baltimore Sun* recounted. "The SUV had been parked by the Armed Forces recruiting station at a strip mall in Catonsville, a bedroom suburb west of Baltimore." Hussain idolized Fort Hood jihadist Nidal Hasan and "thought about nothing but jihad."

In June 2011, the feds charged Muslim jihadists Abu Khalid Abdul-Latif and Wali Mujahidh of conspiring to use machine guns and grenades to "kill officers and employees of the Department of Defense who worked at the MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Stations) located in the Federal Center South building in Seattle, Wash., and to kill other persons assisting such officers and employees in the performance of their duties." They both pleaded guilty, but remained unrepentant and defiant.

In 2012, Ethiopian-born jihadist Jonathan Melaku pleaded guilty to shooting at the Pentagon, Marine and Coast Guard recruiting offices, and the National Museum of the Marine Corps, as well as trying to desecrate graves at Arlington National Cemetery containing the remains of U.S. veterans who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In April 2015, Mohammed Abdullah Hasan was arrested after the feds uncovered his ISIS-linked plot to kill American soldiers with a vehicle bomb at Fort Riley in Kansas.

ISIS hackers have explicitly targeted 100 U.S. service members whose personal details have been disseminated online. In May, the Pentagon raised the security threat level of military bases in the U.S. to "Force Protection Bravo" — the third-highest threat level on a five-tier scale used by the Department of Defense.

You wouldn't know it from Obama's languid response.

Can someone ask the commander in chief: Do U.S. military lives matter enough yet to do more than issue a canned, obligatory condolence to the families of those who serve? How many more lives must be lost before he is as roused about our troops under jihad siege as he is about Bill Cosby, the Confederate flag, "Game of Thrones" or Caitlyn Jenner?

This is not a "circumstance." This is war.

*Michelle Malkin is author of the new book "Who Built That: Awe-Inspiring Stories of American Tinkerpreneurs." Her email address is malkinblog@gmail.com.*

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