

The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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Published Daily Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage paid at Yankton, South Dakota, under the act of March 3, 1979.

Weekly Dakotan established June 6, 1861. Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan established April 26, 1875.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

MEMBERSHIPS

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan is a member of the Associated Press, the Inland Daily Press Association and the South Dakota Newspaper Association. The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to use of all the local news printed in this newspaper.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES*

(Payable in advance)

CARRIER DELIVERY

1-month.....\$12.09

3 months.....\$36.27

6 months.....\$72.53

1-year.....\$135.09

MOTOR ROUTE

(where available)

1 month.....\$14.51

3 months.....\$43.53

6 months.....\$87.05

1 year.....\$139.14

MAIL IN RETAIL

Trade Zone

1-month.....\$16.93

3 months.....\$50.79

6 months.....\$101.57

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MAIL OUTSIDE

RETAIL TRADE ZONE

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OPINION

Wage Law: Timing And Perception

Sometimes, timing and perception are everything. Frankly, those may be two big problems with the new juvenile minimum wage law in South Dakota.

Despite some hope otherwise in some quarters, Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed into law on Friday a bill that will set the minimum wage for youth under age 18 at \$7.50 an hour.

This came less than five months after the state's voters strongly endorsed a blanket increase in the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$8.50 an hour, plus a rider to adjust the level upward (but not downward) for inflation.

The change in the law was introduced in January and was backed by several businesses, plus the South Dakota Retailers Association and the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

So, the timing comes immediately in the wake of state residents declaring by a 55-45 percent margin that they want a change in the law. Apparently, that strong declaration of public support wasn't enough of a resounding statement for a majority of lawmakers to take to heart.

Meanwhile, consider the aforementioned groups that were advocating for the change. There is certainly nothing wrong or anything nefarious about those entities, but they would seem to be the likely groups to have resisted raising the minimum wage at all last fall. Failing that, they would seem to be the likely forces working to chip away at the measure — in this case, by undercutting a portion of it that directly the youngest workers (who, by the way, can't vote, which may or may not have been a factor in all this).

And it's to these people many lawmakers listened, not to the voters' adamant decree last fall.

In truth, the stated intent of the bill probably has a certain logic, as we've opined here before, and could be argued on its merits. The notion that it might force teens out of the job market because of the "elevated" pay level is a concern, although that would need further study for solid verification. Of course, we won't be getting that chance now.

The arguments against the youth minimum wage bill are also valid. Workers should be paid equally for equal work. Period.

But even this issue is overshadowed by the aforementioned timing and public perception of what transpired.

Rep. Mike Stevens of Yankton was right in voting against the bill by arguing that the raise is what the citizens of the state wanted and they should get what they endorsed last fall. He recognizes the need to acknowledge the public will expressed at the polls. And if there are changes needed down the line, they could come in the next session or whenever it was deemed practical.

But lawmakers chose to not wait so long to start tinkering with the new law.

One wonders what might be proposed next year to further erode the law, such as a bill that jettisons the inflation element, for example.

This looks awkward and unfortunate, for it seems that some lawmakers refused to accept the public's verdict as the final word on the matter.

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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 Tuesday, March 24, the 83rd day of 2015. There are 282 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 24, 1765, Britain enacted the Quartering Act, requiring American colonists to provide temporary housing to British soldiers.

On this date: In 1832, a mob in Hiram, Ohio, attacked, tarred and feathered Mormon leaders Joseph Smith Jr. and Sidney Rigdon.

In 1913, New York's Palace Theatre, the legendary home of vaudeville, opened on Broadway.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill granting future independence to the Philippines.

In 1944, in occupied Rome, the Nazis executed more than 300 civilians in reprisal for an attack by Italian partisans the day before that had killed 32 German soldiers.

In 1955, the Tennessee Williams play "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" opened on Broadway.

In 1958, rock-and-roll singer Elvis Presley was inducted into the Army in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1975, Muhammad Ali defeated Chuck Wepner with a technical knockout in the 15th round of a fight in Richfield, Ohio. (Wepner, a journeyman known as the "Bayonne Bleeder," inspired Sly Stallone to make his "Rocky" films.)

In 1976, the president of Argentina, Isabel Peron, was deposed by her country's military.

In 1980, one of El Salvador's most respected Roman Catholic Church leaders, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, was shot to death by a sniper as he celebrated Mass in San Salvador.

In 1989, the supertanker Exxon Valdez ran aground on a reef in Alaska's Prince William Sound and began leaking an estimated 11 million gallons of crude oil.

In 1995, after 20 years, British soldiers stopped routine patrols in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In 1999, NATO launched airstrikes against Yugoslavia, marking the first time in its 50-year existence that it had ever attacked a sovereign country. Thirty-nine people were killed when fire erupted in the Mont Blanc tunnel in France and burned for two days.

Ten years ago: The U.S. Supreme Court denied an appeal from the parents of Terri Schiavo to have a feeding tube re-inserted into the severely brain-damaged woman. The president of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev, fled the country after opposition activists stormed his headquarters, seized control of state television and rampaged through government offices. Chess legend Bobby Fischer was freed after being detained nine months in Japan for

trying to leave the country with an invalid U.S. passport; he boarded a flight to his new home, Iceland. The American version of "The Office," based on a BBC-TV series, premiered on NBC.

Five years ago: Keeping a promise he'd made to anti-abortion Democratic lawmakers to assure passage of his historic health care legislation, President Barack Obama signed an executive order against using federal funds to pay for elective abortions covered by private insurance. Actor Robert Culp died in Los Angeles at age 79. Singer Johnny Maestro died in Florida at age 70.

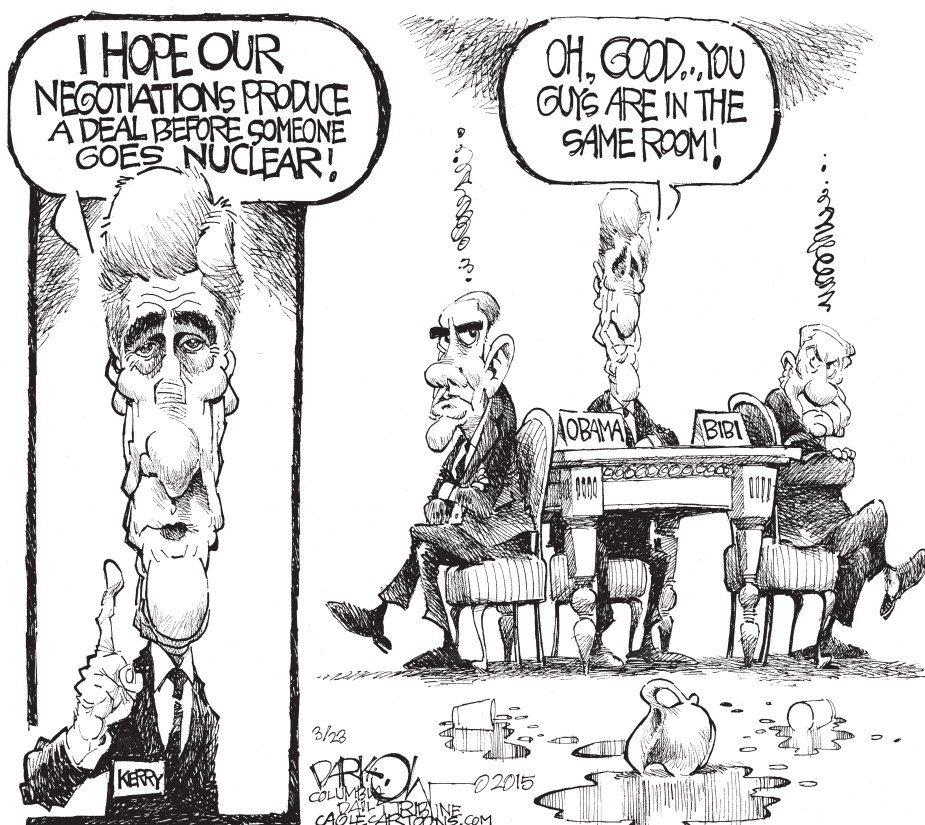
One year ago: President Barack Obama began a week of international travel as he arrived in the Netherlands with Russia's Crimean incursion at the top of his agenda. An Egyptian court sentenced to death nearly 530 suspected backers of ousted President Mohammed Morsi over a deadly attack on a police station, capping a swift, two-day mass trial in which defense attorneys were not allowed to present their case. Five former employees of imprisoned financier Bernard Madoff were convicted at the end of a six-month trial in New York that cast them as the long arms of his boss.

Today's Birthdays: Poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti is 96. Actor William Smith is 82. Fashion and costume designer Bob Mackie is 76. Actor R. Lee Ermey is 71. Movie director Curtis Hanson is 70. Former Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire is 68. Rock musician Lee Oskar is 67. Singer Nick Lowe is 66. Rock musician Dougie Thomson (Supertramp) is 64. Fashion designer Tommy Hilfiger is 64. Comedian Louie Anderson is 62. Actress Donna Pescow is 61. Actor Robert Carradine is 61. Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer is 59. Actress Kelly LeBrock is 55. Rhythm-and-blues DJ Rodney "Koolhaire" Terry (Ghastown DJs) is 54. TV personality Star Jones is 53. Country-rock musician Patterson Hood (Drive-By Truckers) is 51. Actor Peter Jacobson is 50. Rock singer-musician Sharon Corr (The Corrs) is 45. Actress Lauren Bowles is 45. Actress Lara Flynn Boyle is 45. Rapper Maseo (AKA P.A. Pasemaster Mase) is 45. Actress Megyn Price is 44. Actor Jim Parsons is 42. Christian rock musician Chad Butler (Switchfoot) is 41. Actress Alyson Hannigan is 41. NFL quarterback Peyton Manning is 39. Actress Olivia Burnette is 38. Actress Jessica Chastain is 38. Actor Amir Arison (TV: "The Blacklist") is 37. Actress Lake Bell is 36. Rock musician Ben Gershman (O.A.R.) is 35. Neo-soul musician Jesse Phillips (St. Paul & the Broken Bones) is 35. Actress Keisha Castle-Hughes is 25.

Thought for Today: "If merely 'feeling good' could decide, drunkenness would be the supremely valid human experience." — William James, American psychologist (1842-1910).

FROM THE BIBLE

Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it ... and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. 2 Samuel 6:6-7. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Think Of The Children

BY MICHAEL REAGAN

CagleCartoons.com

"What about the children?"

Politicians of both parties often stoop to using our children as props whenever they're fighting for a new law or pet government program.

They argue we need to cut the \$18 trillion debt, regulate the Internet or pay teachers more "for our children."

"Think of the children" is almost always an emotional and irrational appeal made in desperation by those who don't have a reasonable or legitimate argument.

Invoking "the children" is pure BS. It's obvious political BS. But it's BS that's been used for a long time by Democrats and Republicans.

It became so common that it was satirized way back in the early 1990s in the "The Simpsons," when the character Helen Lovejoy constantly shrieked "Think of the children" during town debates over everything from lowering taxes to what to do about too many bears roaming the streets.

Despite becoming a cultural joke, using "the children" as emotional weapons in political warfare still goes on all the time.

Every other lousy politician in Washington who wants to tax, subsidize or regulate something still claims he's doing it "for the children" — whether it's saving the planet from climate change, giving amnesty to illegal immigrants or intervening in Syria.

But when it comes to passing a piece of legislation that will actually do something to help hundreds of thousands of real children, it's another story.

As part of the latest parliamentary maneuvering and cat-fighting between Democrats and Republicans, the passage of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 has been delayed in the Senate.

Passed by the House, and having broad bipartisan support, the act would strike an important blow in the fight against human sex trafficking.

The act would create a fund to help authorities in the USA deter and combat sex trafficking, prosecute traffickers when they are caught and provide assistance to private groups that work to rescue and restore the lives of trafficking victims — most of whom are children.

We hear little about it, but human traffick-



Michael REAGAN

ing is a serious problem in the United States and around the globe. The U.S. State Department estimates there are 27 million victims of trafficking worldwide.

Human trafficking is a \$32 billion industry involving more than 125 countries. The majority of victims are women and girls who are forcibly trafficked from one place to another to do work or provide sex, usually under horribly unsafe and unhygienic conditions.

The United States is not untouched by this crime against children. Experts say 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year and about 300,000 American children, particularly children in foster care, are continually at risk of being pulled into the hell of human trafficking.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the typical sex-trafficked child in the United States is 13 or 14 years old.

The average pimp makes upwards of \$200,000 a year from one of his four to eight children, who are forced to have sex 20 to 48 times a day.

Private organizations like the Polaris Project and Arrow Child and Family Ministries in Texas, which I'm affiliated with, are working hard to educate the public about the horrors of sex-trafficking and rescue as many young victims as they can.

But it's a huge job and the public and private resources to do it are spread thin and hard to acquire.

With the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, Republicans and Democrats are in a great position to actually do something "for the children" instead of just talking about it.

For now the act has become another bargaining chip in Washington's never-ending private poker game.

It will pass eventually. Even Congress gets it right once in a while. But it's time for politicians to quit playing politics with the lives of our children.

Michael Reagan is the son of President Ronald Reagan, a political consultant, and the author of "The New Reagan Revolution" (St. Martin's Press). He is the founder of the email service reagan.com and president of The Reagan Legacy Foundation. Visit his websites at www.reagan.com and www.michaelereagan.com. Send comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com. Follow @reaganworld on Twitter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The 'Human Court'

Rev. Charles W. Wonnemberg, Wakonda

The voice of South Dakota has been annulled by an unelected official. U.S. District Judge Karen Schrier recently declared unconstitutional our state's definition of marriage as between one man and one woman.

The decision is a departure from the millennia-old Biblical teaching and the witness of the natural order of creation.

If the federal ruling is upheld, the declaration on the great seal of South Dakota, "Under God the People Rule," is emptied of all meaning. The ruling changes our understanding of who God is and takes away the people's rule.

It begs the question: Does a human court know better than the court of heaven?

Poll Results

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

LATEST RESULTS:

Should Gov. Dennis Daugaard sign the youth minimum wage bill?

No64%

Yes.....30%

Not sure.....6%

TOTAL VOTES CAST287</