

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

Transgender Policies: Awkward Issues

Officials in South Dakota and Nebraska are working to deal with a modern issue that baffles many of us. This issue is how the activities associations of the two states will deal with potential transgender athletes in their schools.

Both state groups are currently weighing proposals to make these accommodations.

Last month, the South Dakota High School Activities Association's (SDHSAA) Interim Committee rejected a pair of proposals that would define athletes' genders based on what their birth certificates say. The association has been grappling with the transgender issue for more than a year after the committee drafted a policy that was based on similar measures in other states. So far, 14 other states, as well as the District of Columbia, have laws on the matter similar to what South Dakota has adopted. This law currently states that athletes who want to participate in a gender-specific activity must submit a request to the SDHSAA along with documentation to prove they aren't applying for the move in order to gain what is termed "an unfair competitive advantage."

Meanwhile, the Nebraska School Activities Association's board of directors has been meeting privately to discuss the direction of its changes. Several parochial schools and at least one conservative group have called on the state to pass guidelines mandating — similar to the failed South Dakota measures as well as efforts in other states — that athletes compete in sports based on the gender listed on their birth certificates. Other issues include locker room and restroom access, and whether mandates on how to treat transgender athletes violate the constitutional rights of church schools.

This has been a tricky issue in both states and across the nation, and it's one that may well be addressed in legislative proceedings this winter.

This is also an issue that, frankly, many people find awkward and confounding. Most of us cannot profess to know or understand the issues involved with changing one's gender identity. This is, obviously, a genuinely profound personal conflict that defies easy understanding by those who haven't experienced it. We cannot truly appreciate the inner struggle that leads to this kind of decision, which can never be made lightly. We know what seems logical, but what does that mean for those people for whom such "logical" guidelines do not apply? Thus, finding a clear, workable solution can be difficult.

Ultimately, the activities associations in the two states are taking the more prudent approach on this issue, which, they do admit, doesn't arise too often. Addressing this sensitive issue rather than adopting rules aimed at locking in the status quo is a more productive method than ignoring it or passing rules that effectively make it go away.

The associations are confronting reality. It's a reality that has been shaped in part by the people who are bringing these issues forward. The reality has also been shaped by court decisions that support the rights of transgender students in public institutions. Also, the Office of Civil Rights has declared that such issues fall under Title IX oversight, which means these cases are being monitored for discriminatory practices.

So, South Dakota and Nebraska officials know the lay of the land in this matter, and they've responded accordingly.

How the lawmakers in those states will react could be another matter. Or maybe it won't. That remains to be seen.

But as is, the two associations are sailing the right course, and probably the most practical one possible in this difficult issue.

kmh

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, Nov. 24, the 328th day of 2015. There are 37 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Nov. 24, 1865, Mississippi became the first Southern state to enact laws which came to be known as "Black Codes" aimed at limiting the rights of newly freed blacks; other states of the former Confederacy soon followed.

On this date: In 1784, Zachary Taylor, the 12th President of the United States, was born in Orange County, Virginia.

In 1859, British naturalist Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species," which explained his theory of evolution by means of natural selection.

In 1939, British Overseas Airways Corp. (BOAC) was formally established.

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. bombers based on Saipan attacked Tokyo in the first raid against the Japanese capital by land-based planes.

In 1950, the musical "Guys and Dolls," based on the writings of Damon Runyon and featuring songs by Frank Loesser, opened on Broadway.

In 1963, Jack Ruby shot and mortally wounded Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, in a scene captured on live television.

In 1965, Joseph-Desire Mobutu (later known as Mobutu Sese Seko) seized power in the Congo (later known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, and for a time, as Zaire) through a military coup.

In 1969, Apollo 12 splashed down safely in the Pacific.

In 1971, a hijacker calling himself "Dan Cooper" (but who became popularly known as "D.B. Cooper") parachuted from a Northwest Orient Airlines 727 over the Pacific Northwest after receiving \$200,000 dollars in ransom; his fate remains unknown.

In 1974, the bone fragments of a 3.2 million-year-old hominid were discovered by scientists in Ethiopia; the skeletal remains were nicknamed "Lucy."

In 1985, the hijacking of an Egyptian jetliner parked on the ground in Malta ended violently as Egyptian commandos stormed the plane. Fifty-eight people died in the raid, in addition to two others killed by the hijackers.

In 1995, voters in Ireland narrowly approved a constitutional amendment legalizing divorce.

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber struck outside a hospital south of Bag-

dah while U.S. troops were handing out candy and food to children; the blast killed some 30 people. A giant balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York snagged a street light and caused part of it to fall, injuring a woman and a child. Actor Pat Morita died in Las Vegas at age 73.

Five years ago: A jury in Austin convicted former U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, on charges he'd illegally funneled corporate money to Texas candidates in 2002. (DeLay's convictions were overturned on appeal.)

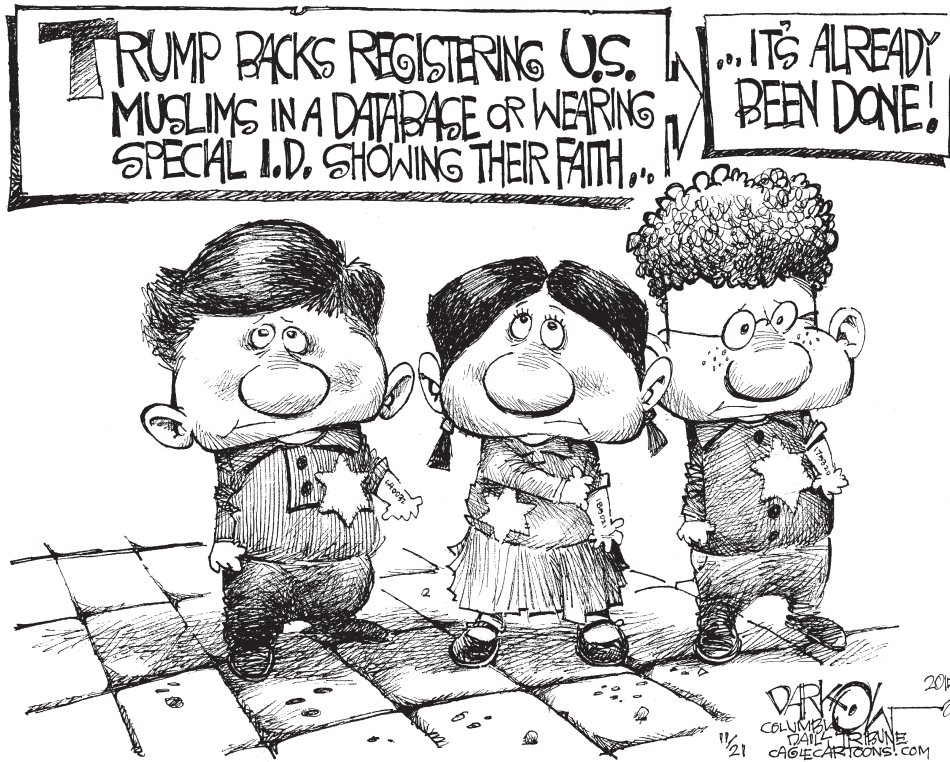
One year ago: Under pressure from President Barack Obama, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel submitted his resignation amid White House concerns about his effectiveness and broader criticism from outside about the administration's Middle East crisis management. It was announced that a grand jury in St. Louis County, Missouri, had decided against indicting Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson in the death of Michael Brown; the decision enraged protesters who set fire to buildings and cars and looted businesses in the area where Brown had been fatally shot.

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson is 77. Country singer Johnny Carver is 75. Former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue is 75. Rock drummer Pete Best is 74. Actor-comedian Billy Connolly is 73. Former White House news secretary Marlin Fitzwater is 73. Former Motion Picture Association of America Chairman Dan Glickman is 71. Singer Lee Michaels is 70. Actor Dwight Schultz is 68. Actor Stanley Livingston is 65. Rock musician Clem Burke (Blondie; The Romantics) is 61. Record producer Terry Lewis is 59. Actor/director Ruben Santiago-Hudson is 59. Actress Denise Crosby is 58. Actress Shae D'Lyn is 53. Rock musician John Squire (The Stone Roses) is 53. Rock musician Gary Stonadge (Big Audio) is 53. Actor Conleth Hill is 51. Actor-comedian Brad Sherwood is 51. Actor Garrett Dillahunt is 51. Actor-comedian Scott Krinsky is 47. Rock musician Chad Taylor (Live) is 45. Actress Lola Glaudini is 44. Actress Danielle Nicolet is 42. Actor/writer/director/producer Stephen Merchant is 41. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Chen Lu is 39. Actor Colin Hanks is 38. Actress Katherine Heigl is 37. Actress Sarah Hyland is 25.

Thought for Today: "There is a great deal of difference in believing something still, and believing it again." — W.H. Auden, British poet (1907-1973).

FROM THE BIBLE

And [Jesus] asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." Mark 8:29. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



The Rez of the Story

A Feast Of Facts About Potatoes

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), As you hoist that extra helping of delicious mashed potatoes (we all do it) on your Thanksgiving plate this year, consider the following FYI to add to your growing knowledge of Native America. Thus if your children, grandchildren or anyone else you call kin asks, "Where do potatoes come from?" You can take advantage of a teachable moment that just might start the ball rolling as far as abandoning some of your families stereotypes about Native people that have assigned us to the marginalized category of human history.



Vince TWO EAGLES

According to Emory Dean Keoke and Kay Marie Porterfield co-authors of American Indian Contributions to the World our relative the "Potato plants belong to the Solanaceae family, to which Tobacco, Tomatoes, and Chillies, also belong. Over 200 varieties of wild potatoes grow from what is now Colorado to what are now Chile and Argentina. The indigenous peoples of the Andean region of South America were the first to domesticate potatoes and to cultivate them as a food crop. The earliest potato, found in an archaeological site in central Peru, has been dated to about 8000 B.C. Scientists believe that American Indians began domesticating potatoes at the end of the ice age. Four thousand years later, indigenous people living in the Andean highlands had begun to rely on potatoes as a major part of their diet. By about 2000 B.C. Indians in the coastal region of what is now Peru were also cultivating this crop extensively."

They go on to report, "During the reign of the Inca, who established their empire in what is now Peru in about A.D. 1000, American Indian farmers were growing not only white potatoes but red, yellow, black, blue, green, and brown ones as well. They were deliberately developing potatoes of varying sizes and shapes that would do well under a number of growing conditions [Sound like empty headed "savages" to you?]. Because potatoes are easily grown, flourishing in a number of climates, and are high in both vitamin C and starch, they were an efficient way of meeting dietary needs for a number of people."

They continue, "In 1531 when Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro landed in what is

now Peru, the indigenous Andean people had developed about 3,000 [yes, that's three thousand] types of potatoes and had also invented a method to freeze dry them for storage. The Inca ... ate boiled potatoes as a vegetable and also made a kind of unleavened potato bread made from flour that had been ground from freeze-dried potatoes. They also added this potato flour to soups and stews and made a gruel, or porridge, from it."

My theory is that somewhere along the way after thousands of years cooking potatoes somebody, somewhere must have dropped a boiled potato and accidentally stepped on the dropped potato, consequently smashed it under foot, and inadvertently invented "mashed potatoes."

Keoke and Porterfield continue, "On one hand, many self-appointed experts claimed that the potato was not fit for human consumption because it had not been mentioned in the Bible. In 1618 potatoes were banned in the Burgundy region of France because people were convinced that eating them caused leprosy. In Switzerland experts blamed potatoes for causing scrofula, a disease characterized by swollen glands and coughing. Some European Orthodox religious sects declared the potato the devil's plant and made it a sin for their members to eat it."

"Irish tenant farmers became so dependent on the potato for their subsistence that a series of blights in the mid-1800s caused widespread starvation. Unlike South American Indian farmers, who planted a number of varieties of potatoes as an insurance against crop failure, Europeans had become dependent on one variety—the "Irish" potato. Within the space of a few years, the population of Ireland decreased from 9 million to about 4 million because of deaths as a result of the famine, emigration and other causes."

As a final thought on the subject of the now famous potato (especially at Thanksgiving time) they conclude, "Today about 250 varieties of potatoes are grown in the United States, with 20 of these varieties constituting three-fourths of the total harvest."

And now you know the rez of the story. Happy Thanksgiving everyone! Someday we'll get it right.

Doksha (later) . . .

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Vegetarian Feast

York Dahlstrom, Yankton
While President Obama is pardoning two turkeys for Thanksgiving, every one of us can exercise that same presidential power by choosing a nonviolent Thanksgiving observance that spares a turkey's life.

And here are some good reasons:
• You can brag about pardoning a turkey — like Obama.

• You truly are what you eat. Who wants to be a "butterball"?
• Fruits and vegetables don't have to carry government warning labels.

• You won't sweat the environment and food resources devastation guilt trip.

• You won't spend a sleepless night wondering how the turkey lived and died.

• Your body will appreciate a holiday from saturated fat, cholesterol, and hormones.

• You won't have to call Poultry Hotline to keep your family out of the emergency room.

Seriously, this Thanksgiving, let's give thanks for ! our good fortune, health, and happiness with a life-affirming, cruelty-free feast of vegetables, fruits, and grains.

Our own dinner will feature a soy or wheat-based roast, mashed potatoes, stuffed squash,

Poll Results

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

LATEST RESULTS:

How much of your holiday shopping do you plan to do online this season?

None at all.....	33%
At least half of it.....	25%
A little bit.....	24%
All of it.....	9%
Not sure at this moment.....	9%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	215

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 individuals on the U.S. terrorist watch list should be prohibited from purchasing firearms?
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN's Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

candied yams, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. An Internet search on "vegetarian Thanksgiving" is getting us more recipes and other useful information than we could possibly use.

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