

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

A Broader Approach To Domestic Abuse

A South Dakota legislative committee's recommendations to expand domestic violence laws is an effort to bring our laws securely into the 21st century. The Domestic Abuse Study Committee, which held one of its meetings in Yankton this past summer, unveiled its recommendations Monday. These proposals will be taken up by the full Legislature this winter.

The recommendations include expanding domestic abuse laws to couples who are in romantic relationships but aren't living together, and add the possibility of extra charges being filed should an act of domestic violence happen in the presence of a child.

Overall, these are good recommendations. The Associated Press reported that committee members believe the laws on domestic abuse need to be updated, and judging from the way society is changing, we agree.

Expanding these laws won't necessarily be easy, however.

For instance, the panel calls for the expansion of the domestic abuse coverage to couples who are, as described by the AP, "in a significant romantic relationship." While the status of relationship would be determined by judges examining the facts of a situation, we could also easily foresee defense attorneys claiming that the criteria for such a label may be subjective and at the mercy of he said/she said claims and counter-claims. We don't really envy any judge who would be forced to sort that out.

On the other hand, we need to point out that the male/female pronouns used in the previous paragraph should not suggest any boundaries. According to the panel's recommendations, domestic abuse laws wouldn't be limited to heterosexual couples. That stands as a wise expansion, no matter what your views on same-sex relationships might be.

We also like the notion of filing additional misdemeanor charges if domestic abuse is committed in the presence of child. This not only acknowledges that children can be victims of domestic abuse, but it also helps shield children who are in abusive family environments. One of the concerns about abusive behavior is that it can become generational: Children can pick it up through environmental experience, subconsciously seizing upon such behavior as being somehow normal when they are adults. (According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, male children who witness acts of domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults.) This is not every child's experience or fate, of course, but it is a strong enough concern to warrant expanding the law as a protective investment in a child's future.

Domestic abuse is an ugly and misunderstood subject. It's estimated that one in four women in this country will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes — but so many cases go unreported. So the issue cannot be ignored. More than that, our laws can't ignore the changing times and threats. The recommendations from this panel are an important step forward.

kmh

THE VIEWS PAGE

■ The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** Views page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters to the editor on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 23, the 296th day of 2013. There are 69 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 23, 1983, 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines, were killed in a suicide truck-bombing at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon; a near-simultaneous attack on French forces killed 58 paratroopers.

On this date: In 1864, forces led by Union Gen. Samuel R. Curtis repelled Confederate Gen. Sterling Price's army in the Civil War Battle of Westport in Missouri.

In 1910, Blanche S. Scott became the first woman to make a public solo airplane flight, reaching an altitude of 12 feet at a park in Fort Wayne, Ind.

In 1915, tens of thousands of women marched in New York City, demanding the right to vote.

In 1941, the Walt Disney animated feature "Dumbo" premiered in New York.

In 1942, during World War II, Britain launched a major offensive against Axis forces at El Alamein in Egypt, resulting in an Allied victory.

In 1954, West Germany was invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which it did the following year.

In 1956, a student-sparked revolt against Hungary's Communist rule began; as the revolution spread, Soviet forces started entering the country, and the uprising was put down within weeks.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon agreed to turn over White House tape recordings subpoenaed by the Watergate special prosecutor to Judge John J. Sirica.

In 1980, the resignation of Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin was announced.

In 1987, the U.S. Senate rejected, 58-42, the Supreme Court nomination of Robert H. Bork.

In 1991, Cambodia's warring factions and representatives of 18 other nations signed a peace treaty in Paris.

In 1995, a jury in Houston convicted Yolanda Saldivar of murdering Tejano singing star Selena. (Saldivar is serving a life prison sentence.)

In 2001, The nation's anthrax scare hit the White House with the discovery of a small concentration of spores at an offsite mail processing center. President George W. Bush announced he had authorized money for improved post office security following the deaths of two postal workers from inhalation anthrax.

Ten years ago: As thousands of anti-war demonstrators protested outside, President George W. Bush thanked Australia for sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan as he spoke to the country's Parliament. Later in the day, the president concluded his

Pacific trip with a visit to Hawaii, where he dropped flowers into the water at the sunken battleship USS Arizona. Madame Chiang Kai-shek, widow of the Chinese nationalist leader, died in New York at age 105. In Game 5 of the World Series, the Florida Marlins beat the New York Yankees 6-4, bringing the team within one game of winning the baseball championship.

Five years ago: Badgered by lawmakers on the House Oversight Committee, former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan denied the nation's economic crisis was his fault but conceded the meltdown had revealed a flaw in a lifetime of economic thinking and left him in a "state of shocked disbelief." The Tampa Bay Rays evened the World Series at one game apiece by beating the Philadelphia Phillies, 4-2.

One year ago: In a debate with Democratic rival Joe Donnelly, Indiana Republican Senate candidate Richard Mourdock said that when a woman becomes pregnant during rape, "that's something God intended." Former Penn State football assistant Jerry Sandusky was transferred to a Pennsylvania state prison from the county jail where he'd been held since his conviction on child molestation charges.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer and former U.S. Senator Jim Bunning, R-Ky., is 82. Movie director Philip Kaufman is 77. Soccer great Pele (pay-lay) is 73. Rhythm-and-blues singer Barbara Ann Hawkins (The Dixie Cups) is 70. ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross is 65. Actor Michael Rupert is 62. Movie director Ang Lee is 59. Jazz singer Diane Reeves is 57. Country singer Dwight Yoakam is 57. Community activist Martin Luther King III is 56. Movie director Sam Raimi is 54. Parodist "Weird Al" Yankovic is 54. Rock musician Robert Trujillo (Metallica) is 49. Christian/jazz singer David Thomas (Take 6) is 47. Rock musician Brian Nevins (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 47. Country singer-musician Junior Bryant is 45. Actor Jon Huertas is 44. Movie director Chris Weitz is 44. CNN medical reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta is 44. Country singer Jimmy Wayne is 41. Actress Vivian Bang (TV: "Sullivan & Son") is 40. Rock musician Eric Bass (Shinedown) is 39. TV personality and host Cat Deeley is 37. Actor Ryan Reynolds is 37. Rock singer Matthew Shultz (Cage the Elephant) is 30. Rhythm-and-blues singer Miguel is 28. Actress Masiela Lusha is 28. Actress Briana Evigan is 27. Actress Jessica Stroup is 27.

Thought for Today: "The tendency to claim God as an ally for our partisan values and ends is the source of all religious fanaticism." — Reinhold Niebuhr, American clergyman and author (1892-1971).

FROM THE BIBLE

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself. John 12:32. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Triumph Of The Right

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

Conservative Republicans have lost their fight over the shutdown and debt ceiling, and they probably won't get major spending cuts in upcoming negotiations over the budget.

But they're winning the big one:

How the nation understands our biggest domestic problem.

Conservative Republicans say the biggest problem is the size of government and the budget deficit.

In fact, our biggest problem is the decline of the middle class and the increasing ranks of the poor, while almost all the economic gains go to the top.

The Labor Department reported Tuesday that only 148,000 jobs were created in September — way down from the average of 207,000 new jobs a month in the first quarter of the year.

Many Americans have stopped looking for work. The official unemployment rate of 7.2 percent reflects only those who are still looking. If the same percentage of Americans were in the workforce today as when Barack Obama took office, today's unemployment rate would be 10.8 percent.

Meanwhile, 95 percent of the economic gains since the recovery began in 2009 have gone to the top 1 percent. The real median household income continues to drop, and the number of Americans in poverty continues to rise.

So what's Washington doing about this? Nothing. Instead, it's back to debating how to cut the federal budget deficit.

The deficit shouldn't even be an issue because it's now almost down to the same share of the economy as it's averaged over the last 30 years.

The triumph of right-wing Republicanism extends further. Failure to reach a budget agreement will restart the so-called "sequester" — automatic, across-the-board spending cuts that were passed in 2011 as a result of Congress's last failure to agree on a budget.

These automatic cuts get tighter and tighter, year by year — squeezing almost everything the federal government does except for Social Security and Medicare. While about half the cuts come out of the defense budget, much of the rest come out of programs designed to help Americans in need: extended unemployment benefits; supplemental nutrition for women, infants and children; educational funding for schools in poor communities; Head Start; special education for students with learning disabilities; child-care subsidies for working families; heating assistance for



Robert REICH

poor families. The list goes on.

The biggest debate in Washington over the next few months will be whether to whack the federal budget deficit by cutting future entitlement spending and closing some tax loopholes, or go back to the sequester. Some choice.

The real triumph of the right has come in shaping the national conversation around the size of government and the budget deficit — thereby diverting attention from what's really going on: the increasing concentration of the nation's income and wealth at the very top, while most Americans fall further and further behind.

Continuing cuts in the budget deficit — through the sequester or a deficit agreement — will only worsen this by reducing total demand for goods and services and by eliminating programs that hard-pressed Americans depend on.

The president and Democrats should reframe the national conversation around widening inequality. They could start by demanding an increase in the minimum wage and a larger Earned Income Tax Credit. (The president doesn't even have to wait for Congress to act. He can raise the minimum wage for government contractors through an executive order.)

Framing the central issue around jobs and inequality would make clear why it's necessary to raise taxes on the wealthy and close tax loopholes (such as "carried interest," which enables hedge-fund and private-equity managers to treat their taxable income as capital gains).

It would explain why we need to invest more in education — including early-childhood as well as affordable higher education.

This framework would even make the Affordable Care Act more understandable — as a means for helping working families whose jobs are paying less or disappearing altogether, and therefore are in constant danger of losing health insurance.

The central issue of our time is the reality of widening inequality of income and wealth. Everything else — the government shutdown, the fight over the debt ceiling, the continuing negotiations over the budget deficit — is a dangerous distraction. The Right's success in generating this distraction is its greatest, and most insidious, triumph.

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of "Beyond Outrage," now available in paperback. His new film, "Inequality for All," was released last month. He blogs at www.robertreich.org.

YOUR LETTERS

For The Cause

Karen Edler, Yankton

It's that time again: October and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It's a time when you find the symbolic pink ribbon on T-shirts, on the labels of grocery products, and even adorned by teams of the NFL.

If anyone would have asked me four years ago what my favorite color was, it definitely would not have been pink. In my vast closet of clothing, was there a single bit of pink.

Pink has "meaning" in my life now; it's not just a color. It reminds me where I was three years ago. I try not to think about the evil disease that took so much and the scars it left behind, but rather express the importance of breast cancer awareness. It is a reminder to make that yearly appointment which we all dread. It expresses the importance of a mammogram, because not always, as in my case, can a lump be detected by a physical exam. So for ourselves, our daughters, moms, sisters and friends, please make that call.

To conclude Cancer Awareness Month, Kozy's Bar is hosting the third annual "Bras for a Cause" event on Sunday, Oct. 27.

Vendors, appetizers and fun for all only at Kozy's Bar — 5 1/2 miles west of Yankton on Highway 50. So get together with your friends, organizations, etc., and decorate your bra for a cause! Registration is 2-4 p.m., with the winners announced at 5 p.m. Entry fee is \$5. There will be prizes for first, second and third place, and People's Choice. For more information and vendors who wish to participate, please contact Kris Hacecky at 605-661-5949.

This year, proceeds are going to Team HOPE to support families affected by cancer. Thank you, Kris, for sponsoring this great event and supporting Team HOPE!

The Pain We Feel

Matt Craft, Gayville

On Oct. 4, tornadoes ripped through many of South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and many more — some of them taking the smallest damage to the town/city to the largest amount of damage.

That night was I was home, and just won-

dering if we were going to get hit. Luckily, Gayville didn't get one. But the day after that, I saw headlines about the tornadoes and their damage. I saw some pictures, and thought to myself, "Some of the towns got hit pretty bad." So as I was writing this letter, I was thinking to myself, "Hey, we ALL could help these people out with food and other things, but we need to pray for them."

So IF you have a Bible, go to Psalms 22:24. This first prayer is called the pain prayer; the second prayer you should say prayer out loud: "Lord, I lift my eyes up to you and also my heart and soul. I want this prayer to go to whoever is in need of healing and they need hope. Please, Lord, guide their bodies and souls to the spirit of hope and joy, and to the spirit of healing. Amen."

Historic Revelry

Dakota Territorial Museum Staff

The Dakota Territorial Museum and Yankton County Historical Society would like to thank everyone who attended our Historic Revelry and Annual Meeting on Sunday, Oct. 6.

The 1950s theme gave way to a lot of fun and laughter for this year's event and helped us raise more than \$4,000 for the general operating and care/preservation of the museum collection.

A huge "thank you" goes out to all of our volunteers and supporters. We have a great team of volunteers and dedicated board members who give of their time for the education and preservation of our history. Also, we want to thank Yesterday's Café, Hy-Vee, Conkling Distributing, The Meat Lodge, McDonald's, Minerva's Bar & Grille, Czech Heritage Foundation, Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen, Richard Pillar, Lars & Liz Annings, Bill Boshin, Karen Harmelink, Bunnings Menschen and Sue Miles for their financial and in-kind contributions. And thank you to The JavaTones for providing great music, and The Center for allowing us to use their facility as our location.

Thank you again to the members of the Yankton County Historical Society and the public. We couldn't do what we do without your support.