

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Money Gets Too Large To Ignore

WATERTOWN PUBLIC OPINION, Watertown (Oct. 14): At last count, there were 13 petitions circulating in hopes of getting enough signatures to land on South Dakota's 2016 ballot. Two of them caught our eye because despite their controversial nature they could be the answer to a lot of problems facing South Dakota.

One is a measure to legalize marijuana for medical use. If approved, patients with a debilitating condition, as determined by a doctor, could receive a state-authorized registration card and possess, cultivate and use marijuana. Designated caregivers could also possess and use marijuana.

The measure also allows for marijuana testing, manufacturing and cultivation facilities, as well as dispensaries. While the possession, use, cultivation and distribution of marijuana are still illegal under federal law, advocates say legalizing the drug for medicinal purposes could help people with rare conditions.

Another measure seeks to decriminalize the possession of one ounce or less of marijuana or marijuana paraphernalia. If approved, those in possession of one ounce or less of marijuana or marijuana paraphernalia would be subject to a civil penalty, rather than the current criminal penalty. Currently, possession of two ounces of marijuana or less is a Class 1 misdemeanor punishable by up to 1 year in jail, a \$2,000 fine or both.

We've commented on marijuana on the ballot before and that similar votes have been defeated. We've also said that sooner or later there's a good chance South Dakota will approve the use and possession of marijuana either for medical purposes and/or recreational purposes. The reason is simple: There's just too much money to ignore forever.

Consider states that have already approved legislation and made marijuana legal just like tobacco, alcohol or other substances. In Oregon, where legal recreational sales began earlier this month, pot retailers pulled in an estimated \$11 million — more than double the \$5 million worth of recreational marijuana sold in Colorado the first week it was legal to do so there.

Legal recreational cannabis sales in Colorado began last year. According to sales data from Colorado's Department of Revenue released Friday, sales of recreational pot topped \$59.2 million for last September, while medical marijuana dispensaries pulled in \$41.4 million, for a combined \$100.6 million — the highest monthly total since legal recreational cannabis sales began there in January 2014. That's one green creating a lot more green for state lawmakers to figure out how to spend.

By the way, September was the seventh time in eight months that marijuana sales in Colorado exceeded the previous month's total. In May, combined recreational and medical sales (\$74.31 million) fell marginally from April's \$74.64 million.

In Washington state, retail pot sellers had been enjoying month-to-month jumps until July, when revenues from recreational marijuana were \$31.1 million, or down about 6 percent from June, according to data from the state Liquor and Cannabis Board. Despite the dip, Washington's recreational pot sales are on pace to surpass \$300 million this year.

Now let's say, for the sake of argument, South Dakota some day decides to follow suit. The problem finding the money needed to raise teacher salaries would almost certainly disappear. So too would coming up with the money needed to replace and repair highways, roads and bridges across the state.

Imagine what a large infusion of cash from pot sales could do toward expanding Medicaid roles. We can go on and on about what that kind of cash could do in South Dakota.

We'll be the first to admit that if legalized marijuana became a reality in South Dakota revenue levels here would almost certainly be lower than in more populous states like Colorado, Oregon and Washington. We might have a better idea of what revenue potential might be after the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe starts selling pot in a few months. That's legal because sales will be on tribal property.

Like we've said before, regardless of how you feel about pot, there's too much money at stake in legal marijuana to ignore forever.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View 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 on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, October 19, the 292nd day of 2015. There are 73 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On October 19, 1765, the Stamp Act Congress, meeting in New York, adopted a declaration of rights and liberties which the British Parliament ignored.

On this date: In 1781, British troops under Gen. Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, as the American Revolution neared its end.

In 1789, John Jay was sworn in as the first Chief Justice of the United States.

In 1814, the first documented public performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" took place at the Holliday Street Theater in Baltimore.

In 1864, Confederate Lt. Gen. Jubal A. Early's soldiers attacked Union forces at Cedar Creek, Virginia; the Union troops were able to rally and defeat the Confederates.

In 1914, the U.S. Post Office began delivering mail with government-owned cars, as opposed to using contracted vehicles. The First Battle of Ypres began during World War I.

In 1935, the Council of the League of Nations imposed sanctions against Italy for invading Abyssinia.

In 1944, the U.S. Navy began accepting black women into WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). The play "I Remember Mama" by John Van Druten opened at the Music Box Theater on Broadway.

In 1951, President Harry S. Truman signed an act formally ending the state of war with Germany.

In 1960, the United States began a limited embargo against Cuba covering all commodities except medical supplies and certain food products.

In 1977, the supersonic Concorde made its first landing in New York City.

In 1987, the stock market crashed as the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 508 points, or 22.6 percent in value, to close at 1,738.74.

In 1990, Kevin Costner's Western epic "Dances with Wolves" had its world premiere in Washington, D.C.

Ten years ago: A defiant Saddam Hussein pleaded innocent to charges of premeditated murder and torture as his trial opened under heavy security in the former headquarters of his Baath Party in Baghdad. The Houston Astros clinched

their first World Series berth with a 5-1 win over St. Louis in Game 6 of the National League Championship Series.

Five years ago: The Pentagon directed the military to accept openly gay recruits for the first time in the nation's history. Hosam Smadi, a Jordanian man caught in an FBI sting trying to blow up a Dallas skyscraper, was sentenced to 24 years in prison after telling the court he was ashamed of his actions and renouncing al-Qaida. "Happy Days" patriarch Tom Bosley died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 83.

One year ago: Pope Francis beatified Pope Paul VI, concluding a remarkable meeting of bishops debating family issues that drew parallels to the tumultuous reforms of the Second Vatican Council which Paul oversaw and implemented. An Associated Press investigation found that dozens of Nazis war criminals and SS guards had collected millions in U.S. Social Security pension payments after being forced out of the United States. Peyton Manning broke Brett Favre's NFL record of 508 touchdown career passes as he threw four TD passes in Denver's 42-17 victory over the San Francisco 49ers.

Today's Birthdays: Author John Le Carré is 84. Artist Peter Max is 78. Author and critic Renata Adler is 78. Actor Michael Gambon is 75. Actor John Lithgow is 70. Feminist activist Patricia Ireland is 70. Singer Jeannie C. Riley is 70. Rock singer-musician Patrick Simmons (The Doobie Brothers) is 67. Talk show host Charlie Chase is 63. Rock singer-musician Karl Wallinger (World Party) is 58. Former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele is 57. Singer Jennifer Holliday is 55. Boxer Evander Holyfield is 53. Host Ty Pennington (TV: "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition") is 51. Rock singer-musician Todd Park Mohr (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 50. Actor Jon Favreau is 49. Amy Carter is 48. "South Park" co-creator Trey Parker is 46. Comedian Chris Kattan is 45. Rock singer Pras Michel (The Gipsies) is 43. Actor Omar Gooding is 39. Country singer Cyn Di Thomson is 39. Writer-director Jason Reitman is 38. Actor Benjamin Salisbury is 35. Actress Gillian Jacobs is 33. Rock singer Zac Barnett (American Authors) is 29.

Thought for Today: "Dream in a pragmatic way." — Aldous Huxley, English author (1894-1963).

FROM THE BIBLE

Your faith has saved you; go in peace. Luke 7:40. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Capitol Notebook

How About A Debate On Parties' Beliefs?

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — Ann Tornberg and Pam Roberts, the Democratic and Republican chairwomen in South Dakota, would perform a public service by holding a debate.

On stage they could highlight the major positions of their respective political parties and educate hundreds of thousands of South Dakotans.

To what end? The two major political parties have a common problem.

Large numbers of people have registered to vote as members of no party in South Dakota during the past decade. News reporters typically refer to them as independents.

We make assumptions about why so many voters have taken this route, but we haven't surveyed them to find the reasons.

So ask yourself this question: Do you know what it means today to be a Republican or a Democrat in South Dakota?

The two political parties' activists answer that question every two years at their statewide conventions when they officially adopt platforms and resolutions.

But the only general access to those documents is through their websites at www.sddp.org and www.southdakotagop.com.

Meanwhile, approximately 10,000 South Dakotans reach age 18 each year and can pick a party, or not, if they register to vote.

Statewide elections have been won or lost by swings of less than 10,000 votes.

The latest reflection of this trend against registering with a political party is the effort, led by two Democrats of some renown, to erase the party system.

They are Rick Weiland, a past Democratic candidate for U.S. House and U.S. Senate, and Drey Samuelson, who was chief of staff for Democratic former U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson.

Rather than work to broaden support for the Democratic Party, they want partisan elec-



Bob
MERCER

tions to become non-partisan in South Dakota, except for president.

Republicans currently hold every statewide elected office, from lands commissioner to all three seats in Congress. They have super-majorities in both chambers of the Legislature.

There have been rare periods when Democrats held many of those offices. As recently as 2004, Democrats held all three seats in Congress.

But petition carriers are working this fall to gather sufficient signatures to put several anti-partisan measures on the statewide election ballot in 2016.

Weiland and Samuelson offer their non-partisan election plan. South Dakota Farmers Union wants an independent commission to draw legislative districts.

These would be major turns for politics and government in South Dakota.

Yet the majority of South Dakota's registered voters are still aligned with a political party.

The latest monthly count from the state elections office on Oct. 5 showed 240,452 Republicans; 172,030 Democrats; and 109,959 in the joint category for other, non-affiliated and independent voters.

Roll back to the 2006 general election. The count that autumn was 240,101 Republicans; 190,905 Democrats; and 74,608 in the loose category we call independents.

Those numbers show the Republican brand is stuck in place, the Democratic brand has lost a significant slice of its share, and no-party has gained nearly 50 percent.

Since 2006, our family's children turned 18. Not even a postcard arrived from any political party urging them to consider registering with that party.

As for a chairwomen's debate, would anyone watch?

Something would be better than nothing.

Where There's Smoke: How Old Is Your Smoke Detector?

BY DEPUTY CHIEF LARRY NICKLES

For the Press & Dakotan

The Yankton Fire Department held its annual fire prevention week open house Oct. 7 with more than 500 people in attendance at fire station No. 2.

Fire fighters attended the area schools and contacted more than 2,000 students during fire prevention week showing videos and equipment.

This year new banners displaying fire safety messages were purchased allowing the use of visual aids to assist with teaching in the classroom.

Efforts have been made this year to get more smoke detectors in the homes in Yankton. This year's NFPA Fire Prevention slogan is "Hear the beep where you sleep." Earlier this year, a smoke detector drive going door to door and installing detectors by volunteers and firefighters in the southeastern section of Yankton was successful. At the October open house, nearly 100 detectors were given and registered to local homeowners and they were asked if they rented the apartment or home they lived in. A follow-up by the fire department will be done of the apartment owners to ensure they are in compliance with apartment smoke detection codes, and if the detectors are in place, to check the dates so they are not exceeding the 10-year recommended life of the detectors.

All homeowners and apartment building owners need to check the dates of the detectors whether they are powered by electricity or battery operated. If the detector is more than 10 years old, it is recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and NFPA they be replaced. The detector may not be reliable.

Existing apartment buildings of six apartments or more are required by law to install hard-wire electric detectors on every level as well as every sleeping room. This applies to new construction as well. Electric detectors are



Nickles

recommended in all apartment buildings regardless of the number of apartments due to tampering with the detectors by tenants.

It is also more difficult to remove some electric detectors. Detectors get removed due to nuisance alarms from cooking, steam from showers due to tight quarters or robbing the batteries for devices

and toys or simply because it chirped. It's only telling you it needs a new battery.

It is important to note a couple legal repercussions, the failure of a detector due to tampering or neglect by a tenant or landlord may result in fines or worse should a fire incident take place.

Tenants also have a responsibility to perform monthly smoke detector tests and alert the landlord in the event of a failure. There is question on who pays when a fire occurs in an apartment building or rental. As a tenant, it would be smart not to wait for a decision of who pays, it might be safer to secure renters insurance to protect yourself. Typical renters insurance is under \$10 per month and could have benefits of relocation or living expenses or liability coverage.

Pushing and testing the battery only ensures that the detector sounds and that the detector has power. The only sure way to test a detector for reliability is with smoke or testing equipment. There are smoke detector spray testers available, unfortunately none can be found in Yankton. The fire department is currently testing with a 2.5 ounce smoke test aerosol approved by UL (underwriters labs). The spray was purchased online.

Any questions should be directed to your local fire department or get more information online.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Reply On TIFs

Pat Garrity, Yankton

Yankton County