

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# SD Regents Hold The Line On Tuition

**RAPID CITY JOURNAL (Aug. 29):** President Barack Obama recently spoke at the University of Buffalo in New York to lament the rising cost of a college education. The average tuition cost at public, four-year universities has tripled over the last 30 years, and the president told students that making college affordable is "an economic imperative."

If Obama wanted to call attention to a university system that is trying to hold down college costs, he should have spoken at one of South Dakota's public universities. Earlier this month, the South Dakota Board of Regents announced it would freeze in-state student tuition.

The Regents' gesture isn't entirely aimed at holding the line on postsecondary education costs. The tuition freeze was being offered in exchange for more support from the Legislature — about \$6 million of the Regents' proposed \$11.6 million budget increase would be used to offset higher education costs.

The tuition freeze would have the effect of preventing additional education expenses from being assessed against students while shifting the higher costs to taxpayers.

The Regents' proposed tuition freeze comes after a report on enrollment at the state's six public universities showed a shift to more students taking off-campus courses while students attending classes continue to decline. The report showed a 42 percent increase since 2007 of students seeking degrees through off-campus courses, with an almost equal number taking non-degree coursework off-campus. The courses can be taken online or at one of the university centers in Rapid City, Pierre and Sioux Falls. During the same period, on-campus enrollment rose just 2 percent.

The reason for the increase in off-campus enrollment is the adoption of technology that brings college classes within reach of many residents at a reasonable cost, and more nontraditional students are seeking a postsecondary degree.

Meanwhile, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology continues to be the enrollment leader among the public universities with a 16 percent increase in students over the six-year period to 2,365 students in 2012. As universities go, South Dakota's six public universities that include the School of Mines and Black Hills State University, among the best higher education bargains in the country with an average tuition \$2,000 less than the national average.

While the president complains about the increasing unaffordability of a college education, South Dakota and the Board of Regents are taking steps to increase access to college courses while keeping the cost of taking a class or obtaining a degree within reach of many of South Dakota's families.

Mr. President, if you want to learn more about how to hold down the rising costs of a college education, come to South Dakota and see for yourself.

## 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](mailto:views@yankton.net).

## ON THIS DATE

### By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Sept. 9, the 252nd day of 2013. There are 113 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On September 9, 1513, English forces defeated Scottish invaders in the Battle of Flodden Field; more than 15,000 men were believed killed, including the King of Scots, James IV.

**On this date:** In 1543, Mary Stuart was crowned Queen of Scots at Stirling Castle, nine months after she was born.

In 1776, the second Continental Congress made the term "United States" official, replacing "United Colonies."

In 1850, California became the 31st state of the union.

In 1919, some 1,100 members of Boston's 1,500-man police force went on strike. (The strike was broken by Massachusetts Gov. Calvin Coolidge with replacement officers.)

In 1926, the National Broadcasting Co. (NBC) was incorporated by the Radio Corp. of America.

In 1932, the steamboat *Observation* exploded in New York's East River, killing 72 people.

In 1943, Allied forces landed at Salerno and Taranto during World War II.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the first civil rights bill to pass Congress since Reconstruction.

In 1971, prisoners seized control of the maximum-security Attica Correctional Facility near Buffalo, N.Y., beginning a siege that ended up claiming 43 lives.

In 1976, Communist Chinese leader Mao Zedong died in Beijing at age 82.

In 1986, Frank Reed, director of a private school in Lebanon, was taken hostage; he was released 44 months later.

In 1997, Sinn Fein, the IRA's political ally, formally renounced violence as it took its place in talks on Northern Ireland's future. Actor Burgess Meredith died in Malibu, Calif., at age 89.

**Ten years ago:** The Boston Roman Catholic Archdiocese agreed to pay \$85 million to 552 people to settle clergy sex abuse cases. France's leading undertaker estimated the country's death toll from a summer heat wave at 15,000. Twin Palestinian suicide bombings killed 16 Israelis. Nuclear scientist Edward

Teller died at age 95.

**Five years ago:** President George W. Bush announced he would keep U.S. force strength in Iraq largely intact until the next administration, drawing rebukes from Democrats who wanted the war ended and a bigger boost of troops in troubled Afghanistan. Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of assassinated former Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto, took office as Pakistan's president.

**One year ago:** Iraq sentenced fugitive Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi to death on charges he'd masterminded death squads against rivals in a trial that fueled sectarian tensions in the country. The same day, insurgents carried out a series of bombings and shootings across Iraq that killed at least 92 people. Two points from defeat, Serena Williams regained her composure and her game to come back to beat Victoria Azarenka, 6-2, 2-6, 7-5, for her fourth U.S. Open championship. Shannon Eastin became the first woman to officiate an NFL regular-season game, serving as a line judge in the St. Louis Rams-Detroit Lions game. (Detroit beat St. Louis 27-23.)

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Sylvia Miles is 79. Actor Topol is 78. Rhythm-and-blues singer Luther Simmons is 71. Singer Inez Fox is 71. Singer Dee Dee Sharp is 68. Rock singer-musician Doug Ingle is 67. Country singer Freddy Weller is 66. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Joe Theismann is 64. Rock musician John McFee (The Doobie Brothers) is 63. Actor Tom Wopat is 62. Actress Angela Cartwright is 61. Musician-producer Dave Stewart is 61. Actor Hugh Grant is 53. Actor-comedian Charles Esten (formerly Chip) is 48. Actress Constance Marie is 48. Actor David Bennett is 47. Actor Adam Sandler is 47. Rock singer Paul Durham (Black Lab) is 45. Model Rachel Hunter is 44. Actor Eric Stonestreet is 42. Actor Henry Thomas is 42. Actor Goran Visnjic is 41. Pop-jazz singer Michael Buble is 38. Country singer Joey Martin (Joey + Rory) is 38. Latin singer Maria Rita is 36. Actress Michelle Williams is 33. Actress Julie Gonzalo is 32. Country singer-songwriter Hunter Hayes is 22.

**Thought for Today:** "Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal." — Hannah More, English author and social reformer (1745-1833).

## FROM THE BIBLE

O LORD, You have searched me and known me! Psalm 139:1. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

## YOUR LETTERS

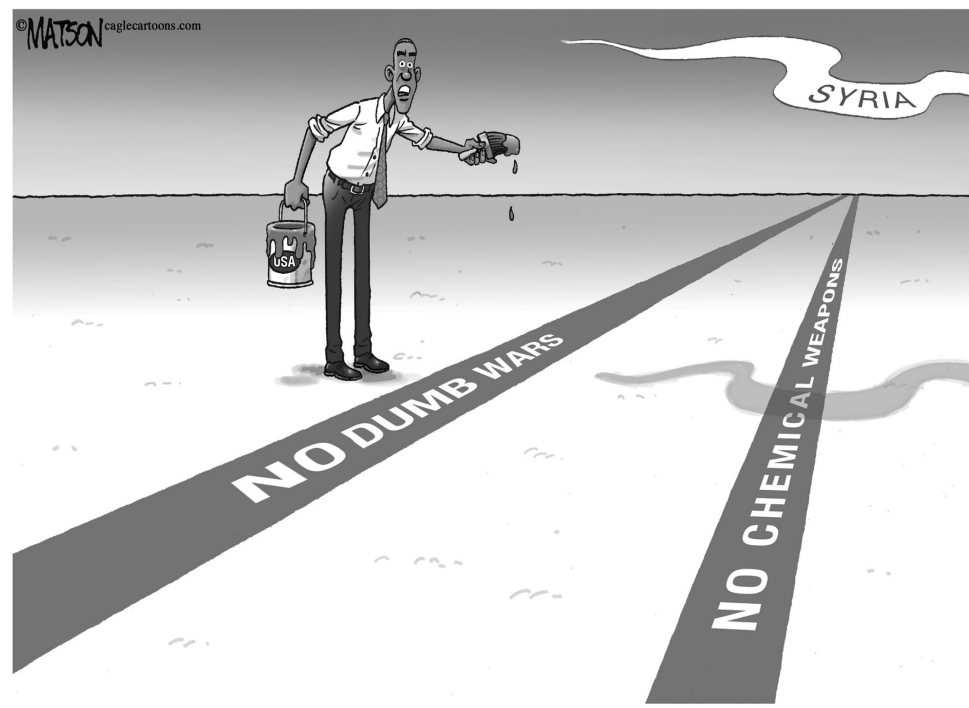
### Atrocities

**George Schnebel, Yankton**  
President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry and other senators and political leaders say we have to do something about the president of Syria killing his people and their

children with chemical weapons.

Yet here in America, the same people and other Americans condone mass murder by abortionists, just as Hitler did to the Jews in Germany.

When we are as a Christian nation going to stop this atrocity here in America?



"...AND I'M TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE NOTION THAT THESE TWO RED LINES WOULD EVER MEET!!!"

# 'NALT' Christians Need To Speak Up

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

"I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ." — attributed to Mohandas Gandhi.

As Dan Savage tells it, it began years ago when he'd go on CNN or MSNBC to discuss LGBT issues opposite the likes of Tony Perkins. Perkins heads the Family Research Council, a leading purveyor of the fiction that homophobia and Christianity are synonymous and inextricable.

"And invariably, after I would have an argument with Tony Perkins," says Savage, "I would get emails from Christians and calls reassuring me that, in these exact words, 'We're not all like that. We're not all like Tony Perkins. We're not all anti-gay, all of us Christians.' And I would write

them back and say, 'I know you're not all like that. My mom is a Christian. I have really great friends who are Christians. ... You need to tell Tony Perkins you're not all like that. He's the one out there claiming to speak for all Christians. Get in his face. Don't get in my face.'"

Savage, a gay blogger and author, coined an acronym for those people. He called them NALT — Not All Like That — Christians.

John Shore, a heterosexual author, blogger and Christian from San Diego who has known Savage for years, took that as a challenge. He and co-founder Evan Hurst went live last week with a new website, The Not All Like That Christians Project ([notalllikethat.org](http://notalllikethat.org)). It's modeled after a site Savage and his partner founded in 2010.

Their It Gets Better Project ([itgetsbetter.org](http://itgetsbetter.org)) solicits videos telling bullied and harassed gay and lesbian kids that they're not alone and encouraging them to hold on through the torment. The videos now number in the tens of thousands.

Not All Like That aims to replicate that success. It solicits videos from Christians tired of seeing their faith used as a club to batter gay and lesbian people. The site went online last week with a few dozen inaugural videos.

Shore is hoping — and, one suspects, praying — to see that number explode. He says he feels a "moral obligation to take Christianity

back" from those who use it as a weapon. His target audience: Christians who are struggling to balance compassion with the dictates of faith. "So many Christians in the middle are just in that discernment process right now," he says. "The best message those people can get is, there are a lot of Christians — and these are real Christians — who have a different take on this matter. And that that take is legitimate, it's grounded in real scholarship; it's grounded in hardcore biblical study."

The view from this pew can be condensed into four words: It is about time. Indeed, it's well past. Jesus of Nazareth was the author of a revolutionary love that crossed lines and resolved separations, that pointedly included the excluded, invited the disinvented, touched the untouchable.

Two thousand years later, we're told that love requires us to demonize and leave aside gay men and lesbians. Worse, many of us who know better have accepted this malarkey in complaisant silence. The NALT Christians Project offers a chance to correct that.

Christians used to get angry at him, says Savage, who is an atheist, for not telling Perkins they are not all like that. "It seems to me," he says, "that if you're a Christian and you're not like that, it's your job to yell at Tony Perkins, not my job."

He's right — not so much about the yelling as about the larger point of standing up and being counted. As LGBT people know all too well, there is something isolating about silence, going along with what you abhor, allowing people to believe you're something you aren't.

And there is, conversely, something liberating in standing up, speaking out, saying the truth. To do so is to offer others courage, to give others voice. That's why we lionize gay people when they come out of the closet.

And why it's time NALT Christians did the same.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for *The Miami Herald*, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at [lpitts@miamiherald.com](mailto:lpitts@miamiherald.com).

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## Capitol Notebook | Bob Mercer

# A Safe Direction For The SDRS

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

**PIERRE** — The election of Dennis Daugaard as governor and running mate Matt Michels as lieutenant governor in 2010 came at a good time for South Dakota taxpayers generally and for tens of thousands of people whose pensions depend on the South Dakota Retirement System.

Daugaard showed in his first budget speech in January 2011 — when he called for 10 percent cuts in state government — that he is fiscally conservative. It is part of his character, learned from his parents, who worked despite both being deaf, and from his time as a trust officer at a bank.

Michels throughout his political life watched SDRS like a fiscal hawk, always keeping in mind his mother, who depended on her pension, and for retirees current and future like her. When a seat opened on the SDRS board this year, Daugaard didn't need to look far.

The board's meeting Thursday was the first for Michels as a trustee. The meeting also was the first for Daugaard as governor. He came with a message for the trustees.

The recent Barron's magazine cover-story declaration, that South Dakota is the best-managed state? Low debt and the performance of SDRS were two big reasons, Daugaard said.

"I get a lot of the credit for that, which I don't deserve. You deserve it," Daugaard told the trustees.

He said he has admiration for their work and for their "responsible, very-adult behavior" in adjusting to volatile investment markets and the recession.

The trustees and the Legislature re-scaled the annual cost-of-living allowance, so that it remains 3.1 percent in solid times, but can gradually dip as low as 2.1 percent when the system gets increasingly out of financial balance.

The trustees also stepped down the annual investment return expectation to 7.25 percent currently from 8 percent a decade ago.

Daugaard said there are only 10 public pension plans of 126 nationally that have expecta-

tions lower than 7.25 percent — and those are "marginally so," he said.