

OPINIONS

Students write to *NSP*

Continued

dents attend city council meetings is to be informed and educated for the future when we can be involved in our local government. Rather than discouraging us to attend local government meetings, adults and officials should encourage involvement. Nobody gets mad at a kindergartener for not knowing their ABCs.

- Ms. Mac's B4 Government Class**
Danielle Miller
Nate Wheeler
Gavin Broihier
Israel Mora
Kristen Jevyak
Mikaela J. Mikkelsen
Frannie Wachtel
Jordanne Twigg
Taylor Marquette
Collin Wilson
Andrew Stoeffen
Pete Stark
Jake Schnoor
Lily Holst
Kristen Drinnon
- Dakota Vaske*
Sara Christensen
Hanna Pitts
Matthew Allen
Bryce Spotts
Blake Murphy
Nathan Schallert
Colton Jessen
Terra Wilson
Seth VanAcker
Colby Lafrenz
Fabricio Costa
Catelyn Cook
Christian Winterlin
Paige Fahrenkrog
- ***

Editor:
We, as current U.S. Government students felt as though it was unfair to gauge the knowledge we have acquired this early into the term as Sarah Hayden did in her article on the Sept. 17. We have just been exposed to the information and we will all, of course, know more by the end of the semester. It is important to remember that we are students, many of which are not of legal voting age as of yet, we are just now getting our feet wet in terms of needing to know about government affairs. Though the issues are pertinent, they have only just recently reached that level for us. Furthermore, North Scott students are the only U.S. Government students that attend these meetings in an effort to learn about our local meetings and decisions. Beyond that, the meeting in question was not accurately represented in the article, as a student did get a number of the questions correct. In addition to that, the McCausland meeting attendants are such a small sample of the students that do go to meetings, it is unfair to draw conclusions off the one meeting you reported on.
Sincerely,

- Ms. Mac's B3 U.S. Government students**
Kier Brown
Nikki McDaniel
Sarah Raymond
Parker Birtell
Tyler Little
Drake Schaefer
Kyla Curtis
Lauren Goodney
- Reon Holt*
Kiwanne Quinn
David Meeks
Cheyenne Moore
Amanda Crocker
Bethany Denison
Nathan Schreck
Jacob Olson
- ***

Editor:
We would like to thank Ms. Hayden for the teachable moments arising from her Sept. 17 "Dumb American" column pertaining to several of our U.S. Government students attendance at a recent McCausland City Council meeting.
For the record, all North Scott U.S. Govern-

ment students must attend a local government meeting as a requirement to pass the class. North Scott High School is one of the very few schools in the area that requires observation at the grassroots level. Our goal is to show students that local government is accessible and made up of members of the community. After attending a meeting students must then describe two significant agenda items discussed at the meeting reflecting on how they, as either council members or school board members, would address the items and finally analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting.

When students in our classes mentioned the column, we read pertinent sections of Ms. Hayden's column to each respective class. The vast majority of students were furious, indignant and felt badly for the students mentioned (but not named) in the column. This, in turn, led to a discussion on freedom of the press versus humiliation of 16- and 17-year-old students.

Should all students know who our governor and lieutenant governor are? Of course. (Should ALL Iowa citizens know? Of course.)

Fact: Students received this assignment just a few classes after the school year began. We suggested they might want to wait a few weeks into the semester for more class content.

Fact: Students were warned that at some meetings they may be asked questions.

Fact: Until the November election, on a round-robin basis, students are reporting on the state gubernatorial and national Senate races. Not only will students know the candidates' names, but more importantly the candidates' respective stances on issues.

Fact: Other students who attended the same meeting easily answered the mayor's questions; however, this was not reported.

Fact: According to our records, of the approximately 85 students who attended a local government meeting spring semester last (academic) year, three attended a McCausland City Council meeting. We are not sure which North Scott area city council meetings Ms. Hayden attends or how many mayors quiz students, but three students is not a wide random sample considering the total number of students, when she wrote, "Every time a new group of kids come to a meeting, they do not know who is the governor of their state."

On a personal basis, we know the students in question. They are great kids who are respectful and would never dream of being rude to adults at a public meeting, or victimize others in a local newspaper column. They are the kinds of students we can count on when needed. They are responsible. They learned these traits from their parents and the North Scott community.

We are grateful to teach in a district where parental involvement drives the character and academic development of their children, our students.

Sincerely,
(Ms.) Mac McDonald
(Mr.) Sean Marmion
U.S. Government teachers
North Scott High School
200 S. 1st St., Eldridge

The U.S. Senate race:

What do the Kochs want?

Editor:
On Sept. 17, a writer stated Joni Ernst received \$25,000 from the Koch brothers and it was the "same money they contribute to all close Senate campaigns."

There are not many families in Iowa that can afford to give \$25,000 to a single candidate, let alone multiple candidates. The money given directly to candidates can be tracked; unfortunately there is a lot more money going into the election cycle than direct contributions to candidates.

In addition to the direct contributions, the Koch brothers and their dark money political network have pledged \$300 million for this election cycle. The Center for Public Integrity reports that Koch linked groups ran nearly 44,000 TV advertisements nationally between 1/1/13 and 8/31/14. To put that in prospective that is 1 out of every 10 TV advertisements in a 20-month period. The Koch Brothers are not just interested in Senate campaigns they have been a major source of funding for House races, state and local candidates, too. There is too much money in politics coming from all directions.

The question I have is just what are they purchasing? What is their agenda? David Koch ran for Vice President on the Libertarian ticket in 1980. I'm sure candidates don't always support everything on their party's platform but many of the items on the Libertarian platform were pretty radical. Some of the platform planks are as follows: repeal of federal campaign finance laws; abolish Medicare and Medicaid; repeal Social Security – pending repeal make Social Security voluntary; oppose all personal and corporate income taxation including capital gains taxes; end government operation, regulation and subsidy of schools and colleges; privatization of public roads and national highway system; and abolish the Environmental Protection Agency.

Most Americans would agree the Libertarian/Republican agenda is too extreme. Even the citizens of the Koch brothers' home state of Kansas are starting to have second thoughts. A few months ago nobody would have predicted there was a chance that Republican Gov. Sam Brownbeck or Republican U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts would be at risk of losing their reelections in the red state of Kansas. While many look at Kansas's \$300 million funding shortfall caused by Brownbeck's massive tax cuts, the increased poverty rates, the cuts in school funding, the cuts in services and say Brownbeck went too far, the Koch Brother supporters say the problem is he just didn't cut enough. Most Americans disagree with the Koch Brother agenda.

Before candidates accept large sums of money from a supporter they should know what that supporter expects in return. The candidate should research what the supporter wanted in the past. If there is a major conflict in the candidate's agenda and supporter's agenda the funds should be declined.

Voters should be able to know who is behind the dark money groups funding advertisements and candidates. If money is speech we ought to who is speaking and what they want.

Kay Pence
20642 270th St., Eldridge

Our democracy is in danger

Editor:
Have you seen all the big Republican yard signs and TV ads? Big corporate money such as the Koch brothers is behind them. Have you seen all the big Democrat yard signs and Jack Hatch for governor TV ads? Not so much; no corporate money.
The successful strategy of the corporations who control the Republican party is to divide and conquer the middle class with social issues which keeps half of middle class voters distracted from the real issue: the ambush of our democracy by the wealthy few.
DEMOS.org, which is a national, non-partisan public policy center, and U.S. PIRG Education Fund released a report after the first presidential election since Citizens United, that found that 32 wealthy donors outspent

3.7 million average citizens. That is shocking! Our democracy is in extreme danger.

It's very simple:
1. You'll either vote for the middle class and democracy, and your own best interests; OR
2. You'll vote for the corporations and conditions of the middle class will continue to deteriorate, and we'll continue to be controlled by a few billionaires.
3. If you don't vote at all, it's a vote for the corporations who own us.
This is a crucial election. The only means we have to restore our democracy is our VOTE. We must use it!

Karen Voelkel
604 W. Prairie Vista Dr., Eldridge

Democrats spend more

Editor:
WHY?
Why does almost every anti-Republican political ad infer the Koch brothers are trying to buy the Iowa Senate election by spending millions on media advertising, criticizing Bruce Braley, in order to elect Joni Ernst?
What's fair for the goose is fair for the gander. Let's look at the source of the money the Democrats are spending, much of it to elect Mr. Braley (source WSJ 9/25/14):
1. Tom Steyer, climate control promoter, \$13 million to two PACs, much of which is being spent in IOWA against Joni Ernst.
2. Democratic Congressional Senatorial Campaign: \$42 million, 55 percent of this is being spent in three states including IOWA. That's \$4 million more than the Republican committee will spend nationally.
3. Senate Majority PAC run by former Harry Reid aides: \$16.5 million dollars; 67 percent is from contributions of \$500,000 or more.
4. Labor Unions: \$6.6 million from coerced union dues.
5. Michael Bloomberg, New York City mayor: \$4.5 to two PACs.
6. George Soros: \$1 million to two PACs plus support for several anti-GOP organizations.
7. Trial lawyers and media moguls: \$4 million; \$250,000 or more each contribution.
8. Fred Eychaner, Chicago media mogul: \$4 million.

In total dollars the Republicans are being vastly outspent by the Democrats. Their war chests are being filled by the super-rich and special interests groups they claim to despise. If the election is being bought, the buying is being done by the Democrats. So get off the Koch brothers. Democrats have their own Trojan horses that want more oats in their special interest bags.

Our country has problems. But those problems have not and will not be solved by returning the same people to congress election after election.

John Stevens
301 South 8th Street, Eldridge

EPA hurts agriculture

Editor:
It is unfortunate, but not unexpected, that Bruce Braley decided to sell out Iowa farmers by voting to support the EPA's plan to implement more overreaching regulations over Iowa agriculture.

Braley was the only member of the Iowa congressional delegation to vote against Iowa's economy at our expense. I guess that is what he is going to have to do, now and later, when his real loyalty is to out-of-state environmentalists that are financing his campaign for U.S. Senate.

It is completely unacceptable that Tom Steyer has so much influence over Braley that he would actively work against the people that he was sent to Washington to represent.

If we can't trust him now, when all of our eyes are on this race, how can we trust him to serve us after the election?


He has shown clearly that he is not one of us. Join me in supporting Iowa and Iowa farmers by voting for Joni Ernst for U.S. Senate.

Paul W. Janeczek
4332 W. 30th St., Davenport

Readers' Poll

Last week's question:
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

With 33 votes counted, when asked if your interest in the games of the NFL would change because of recent reports of as-yet unpunished domestic abuse by players, 39 percent said their enthusiasm for the game will not change and they will watch a before; 46 percent said they'll watch, but the reports have soured them on the game; and 15 percent said they will refuse to watch.



DUMB AMERICAN?

Should high school students be expected to be able to answer basic questions about their government, such as naming the governor of their state?

Vote online at
www.northscottpress.com.
Results will be published next week.
Signed letters to the editor on any topic are welcomed. Send to: North Scott Press, P.O. Box 200, Eldridge, IA 52748, or e-mail: btubbs@northscottpress.com.