

OPINION

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JEFFREY W. OWEN
PUBLISHER
E-mail address:
jowen@thejournalnet.com

SCARLETT SYSE
EDITOR
E-mail address:
syse@thejournalnet.com

"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER
founding editor, 1963

AT ISSUE

The Center Grove school board has decided to slow down high school building projects until a new educational model is developed.

OUR POINT

This is a wise move. Rashness could lead to a high school not suited to the educational process.

CG board right to place books before bricks

The Daily Journal

Center Grove enrollment is growing, and few people think current buildings will hold them all.

For a while, though, it appeared the school board was steaming undeterred toward expanding the high school. Now, though, Center Grove school board members are slowing down the process of demolishing buildings and borrowing money to make way for a renovated and expanded high school.

The school board has asked for an academic plan for the school before approving the demolition of an old elementary school, road improvements and giving the OK on designs for the expanded high school.

The physical redesign of Center Grove High School must be based on the new model for teaching students, board member Mark Dietel said.

"I don't see why we have to be in a hurry to (demolish buildings) until we know more of what will drive the programming and curriculum," he said.

We agree, and we commend the board for slowing down the process.

The growth in the district is not so urgent that there isn't time for thought.

When the district redesigns the high school curriculum, that will have a significant impact on the physical layout of the school. No matter how flexible the design is, it won't totally fit the model.

By waiting a little, the two can be matched exactly. Assistant superintendent Janet Boyle says that new educational format is almost a year away.

If that means putting the design work, financing and site preparations for the project on hold until the educational planning is done, board members appear willing to wait.

This is a good move by the school board.

For one, it dispels the image that Center Grove is putting buildings ahead of education.

Second, it is a wise use of taxpayer money. Even if the final building project costs more, it will save in retrofitting later when the space is reshaped again to fit new educational needs.

Board president James Copp stated the issue clearly: "This is an important process that needs to be defined. How do we move forward? How do we deliver educational curriculum is the first part of their process, and we need to define that and follow with the building in that light."

The board is right to put educational models ahead of architectural plans, in effect, books ahead of bricks.

Every aspect of the layout of the newly designed school needs to be based on what the faculty decides is the best new model for teaching students.

Stellar facilities are worth nothing if the graduates they turn out are less than first class.

Focus: Detainees

Congress must endorse habeas corpus right

Scripps Howard News Service

Congress should tear itself away from the pointless business of passing nonbinding resolutions on Iraq and begin cleaning up the damage we've done to ourselves in the war on terror.

That task became more urgent this week when the federal court of appeals for the District of Columbia upheld, 2 to 1, the constitutionality of a provision denying the right of habeas corpus to detainees held outside the United States.

The Military Commissions Act was passed last year, hastily and without much thought, like so much anti-terrorism legislation, after the Supreme Court told the Bush administration that it had to get congressional permission for its plan to try the detainees before military tribunals.

Part of that law banned the detainees at U.S. prisons in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Afghanistan from challenging in civilian courts the legality of their detention. That right, of habeas corpus, is a bedrock principle of Anglo-Saxon law going back eight centuries, and it is a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution.

Carving out an exception to that right based on a sketchy designation as an "enemy combatant" was a terrible precedent, essentially justifying arbitrary imprisonment.

The senior members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., tried to rectify this departure from U.S. respect for the rule of law last year and failed by just three votes. They have reintroduced their bill in the new Congress.

Another bill, by Leahy and Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., would restore the right of habeas corpus and clean up some other unfortunate provisions in the Military Commissions Act by sharpening the definition of illegal combatant, excluding evidence obtained by coercion and allowing military judges to exclude hearsay evidence.

If the circuit-court ruling stands, the practical effect would be to force the federal courts to dismiss more than 400 habeas-corpus appeals. The ruling will certainly be appealed to the Supreme Court, and one hopes that the high court would stand up for this ancient and fundamental right.

But it would be better if Congress acted first to demonstrate our faith and confidence in our own system.



Difference between jobs, workers put reports at odds

It seems I have to write this column every year. Our elected leaders and their appointees are once again telling us how many jobs they have brought to us through their superlative efforts.

Have pity on them. They know what they are doing, but they don't know what's going on.

Yet, you and I will go to the polls and judge them based on the number of jobs they bring to the city, county or the state when we vote this year and next.

In a nation where we believe jobs are so important as a measure of economic well-being, we devote a great deal of resources to finding out how many jobs are being filled and how many people are working. Oops. That's two different things.

The number of jobs is probably greater than the number of people working because a person may hold more than one job. The federal government pays the states to collect some data on employment, and it collects some data on its own.

Some data are collected monthly, and other data are collected quarterly. Some data are collected from businesses and some from households. As you might imagine, the result is a batch of differing numbers that do not provide a definitive view of economic performance.

How is Indiana doing? If we look at the number of people who say they are working, 2006 may have been a banner year. Early results suggest that 61,800 more people had jobs in '06 than in '05, a 2 percent increase.

That is the biggest numeric increase since 1995. Wow. Can you guess who is going to take credit for that? But hold on until the 2006 data are revised before breaking out any champagne.

If, however, we look at the number of jobs reported by employers (rather than the



Morton Marcus

number of people saying they are employed), we find an increase in 2006 of only 20,800 jobs (0.7 percent) over 2005. Pending a massive upward revision of the numbers for 2006, that's a bummer. Who's going to get blamed for that?

There are technical reasons for a difference between the number of jobs and the number of residents employed.

For example, some people are self-employed or work in firms too small to be included in the monthly survey of jobs. But the difference between a change of nearly 62,000 in one series and nearly 21,000 in another may be hard to explain to an impatient and skeptical public.

There is a fascinating new series available thanks to cooperation between the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and the U.S. Bureau of Census and Labor Statistics.

The Quarterly Workforce Indicators tell us, by state and county, how many jobs have been added and lost during each three-month period. Jobs are added by new jobs being created and firms hiring people to fill existing jobs.

Jobs are lost when workers are dismissed or leave for other reasons.

These are numbers based on actual behavior: They are not the promises (or lies) of news releases issued by governments or firms.

But these numbers are far behind the times. Washington,

West Virginia and Iowa are among the states with data online for the first quarter of 2006.

Illinois, Kentucky, California, North Carolina and Pennsylvania are among the states that have their data in for the last quarter of 2005. As usual in such matters, Indiana is among the laggards with our latest data coming up to just the third quarter of 2005.

When we look at the Indiana indicators data for the year ending in the third quarter of 2005, it appears that we added just 10,000 jobs from the same period a year earlier. A poor record.

But the data are not easy to understand. They tell us that the state had 153,300 jobs created by new firms or firms expanding employment.

The total number of persons leaving jobs because they quit or were let go for some reason was 548,200, and the number of persons hired for existing jobs was 463,500. The difference is 84,700 more than simple churning of employees.

What happened to these 84,700? Did they retire or are they among the unemployed? It's easy to think that they were fully accommodated by the new jobs created (153,300).

But the data are dealing with jobs and not numbers of people. Since people may hold more than one job, it's difficult to get a real grasp what's happening. Maybe some part-time workers are being replaced by full-time workers. Or are former full-time workers getting jobs as part-time workers in new and expanding firms?

Until we know how to read this new indicator series, I hope that politicians will not cite these data as proof of their economic virility.

Morton Marcus is an economist, formerly with the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

Fostering educational partnership aids Indiana's long-term economic growth

Operating in isolation doesn't work.

In today's global economy, cities and towns understand that collaboration is the key to success.

To sustain long-term economic growth in today's global economy, communities such as Greenwood and Franklin are forging close partnerships with government agencies and educational institutions, including Purdue University.

I recently visited Johnson County to get a firsthand view of how well the university is doing to help companies remain competitive in the global marketplace.

An initiative that is making a difference is the technical assistance program, which connects companies with Purdue resources and assists them in becoming more globally competitive.

Since 1986, the program has worked on nearly 6,100 different projects with companies throughout Indiana. Projects have ranged from implementing state-of-the-art technologies to work-force training to energy cost reduction.

One company that has benefited from the technical assistance program is Grimmer Industries, which produces large air compressors.

The program has worked with Grimmer on 14 projects, of which the most recent involved improving operational efficiency. Their collaboration is expected to save the company thousands of dollars in manufacturing costs.



Victor L. Lechtenberg
GUEST COLUMNIST

Another example is Nachi Technology Inc., which produces high-volume bearings used in automotive air conditioning. The technical assistance program assisted them with work force development training.

Purdue's outreach to Indiana companies is paying great dividends.

According to the technical assistance program's recently released annual report, companies have created or preserved nearly 4,600 Indiana jobs since the program's inception.

The partnerships also have spurred \$16.8 million in increased sales, \$31.67 million in sales retained, about \$9.5 million in capital investment and \$5.1 million in cost savings for 2005-06.

Another program that has a positive impact on the quality of life for Johnson County residents is Purdue's Cooperative Extension Service.

It serves as both an economic and educational driving force. Whether it's offering advice on solving agricultural problems or providing instructional programs for both young people and adults, extension staff who call Johnson County home make

a difference on a daily basis.

While these programs illustrate our valuable partnerships with the business and educational sectors of Johnson County, it is time to consider what goals to set for the future. Purdue's board of trustees asks Johnson County residents to consider five questions:

- How has Purdue benefited Johnson County, and what needs might be unmet?

- How can the university partner at the county level to accomplish even more?

- What do businesses, citizens and young people in Johnson County need from a major research university?

- What does Purdue need from Johnson County to help it accomplish mutual goals?

- How can Purdue improve its learning environment to better prepare students for the future?

Ideas can be submitted to Purdue's strategic plan Web site at www.purdue.edu/whatsnext.

Meanwhile, Purdue pledges to continue to use its resources to serve Johnson County.

We look forward to finding more ways to collaborate as we continue our mission of educational and economic growth.

Victor L. Lechtenberg, Purdue's vice provost for engagement, visited Johnson County recently with Purdue President Martin C. Jischke and other university officials. They visit a different community each month to exchange ideas with business, agricultural and community members. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

YOUR VIEWS

Families of autistic kids need support from state

To the editor:

The recently released study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the number of individuals on the autism spectrum — now estimated at one child in 150 — confirms what The Arc of Indiana has seen across Indiana and heard from families: More families have children with autism.

Now that there is confirmation, Indiana needs to act. Families need support to help in caring for their children at home, critical therapies to help their children reach their full potential and community residential programs when it is time for their adult children to live away from home.

The Autism Society of Indiana is completing a comprehensive plan to address, among other issues, the need for family supports, teacher training and eliminating waiting lists for Medicaid waiver services.

The comprehensive plan was authorized by the Indiana Autism Commission and funded by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

The Indiana General Assembly is developing a budget that must address a waiting list for home and community-based supports funded by Medicaid waivers that now exceeds 15,000 people with developmental disabilities, including autism.

The Arc of Indiana supports transferring \$33 million in savings from the closure of state institutions to community-based programs. This could allow 2,000 people to move off waiting lists and begin receiving services.

Family and Social Services Administration Secretary Mitch Roob has stated that an additional \$75 million over the biennium would bring a basic package of services, therapies and support to all those currently on waiting lists. Providing funds to reduce or eliminate the waiting list is an important first step in implementing the comprehensive plan.

Years ago, families were told to place their children in state institutions. Thankfully, Indiana's last state institution for people with developmental disabilities will close this year.

Funds that once supported those institutions can and should be used to support families who now love and care for their children at home but who need help and support.

The time to act is now.

John Dickerson
Executive Director
The Arc of Indiana

Government stymied by partisan bickering

To the editor:

Joseph Ellis in his book "Founding Brothers" describes the first Constitutional Convention. From his description, it wasn't "a walk in the park." From this convention comes the story about a lady asking Benjamin Franklin, "What kind of government are you giving us?" He replied, "A democracy, if you can keep it."

As both our national and state legislators begin their sessions, we're seeing partisan division and rancor continuing, especially at the national level. I'm sure the state will come later.

This political bickering will create gridlock and the public will not be served properly. My condemnation applies to not only the current sessions but also to prior sessions.

Paul Johnson, noted British historian, asks, "Was Washington right about parties?" George Washington addressed the problem of political parties 200 years ago in his farewell address.

He said party spirit was not to be encouraged. There will always be enough spirit for every salutary purpose; but there was a constant danger of excess. The effort ought to be by force of public opinion to mitigate and to assuage it.

He compared party competition to "a flame not to be quenched. It demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, less, instead of warming, it should consume."

We have a chance to express our dislike of political bickering when we vote.

And the beat rolls on.

Oscar Atteberry
Franklin

WRITE A LETTER

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

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