

WTE: "We don't need no stinkin' constitution!"

WTE, *In Our Opinion*, May 2, 2009:

"The people of Wyoming -- including its community college students -- need to get past the idea that the state is supposed to provide them with something for nothing."

The Wyoming Constitution, circa 1890:

97-7-106. Tuition free. "The university shall be equally open to students of both sexes, irrespective of race or color; and, in order that the instruction furnished may be as nearly free as possible, any amount in addition to the income from its grants of lands and other sources above mentioned, necessary to its support and maintenance in a condition of full efficiency shall be raised by taxation or otherwise, under provisions of the legislature."

Under the duties of the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

Wyoming Statute (a)(xviii): "In accordance with W.S. 21-2-501 and 21-2-701(a)(ii) and subject to W.S. 21-2-304 (a)(iii) and 21-9-101 (c), promulgate rules to assure that each child with disabilities receives a free and appropriate education in accordance with his capabilities, including persons who are deaf, blind or have other physical disabilities which prevent them from reading in a normal manner."

Under the duties of the state board of education:

W.S. 21-2-204 (a)(i), "The state board

of education shall establish policies for public education in this state consistent with the Wyoming Constitution and statutes ...

Charter school requirements; authority.

W.S. 21-3-304 (a) "A charter school shall be a public, nonsectarian, non-religious, nonhome-based school which operates within a public school district. Tuition shall not be charged by a charter school."

Free tuition and fees for education of war orphans and veterans; definitions.

W.S. 19-14-106 (b): "The state or any political subdivision shall provide free tuition, matriculation and other fees to all eligible persons who are residents of this state and who are attending or may attend any state institutions in elementary, secondary and college grades, business colleges, state vocational training schools or other educational institutions of this state where courses of instruction are provided in subjects which would tend to enable the eligible persons to engage in any useful trade, occupation or profession."

Free tuition and fees for education of survivors or dependents of deceased or disabled peace officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

W.S. 21-16-1501 (a): The University of Wyoming or any Wyoming community college for up to ten (10) semesters shall provide free tuition and fees for any person who is a surviving dependent of any person described in sub-

section (g) of this section or the dependent of any disabled person described in subsection (h) of this section. If the surviving dependent first enrolls in a community college and then transfers to another community college or the University of Wyoming, the free tuition and fees shall continue until the dependent has completed a cumulative total of ten (10) semesters at the community college level and the university.

None of the foregoing includes the Hathaway Scholarship Program or any other state-funded scholarships. The writer of the preposterous words for the WTE was on the Hathaway Scholarship Program committee until he was unceremoniously dumped by the governor whom he now obviously despises.

Which of the statutory provisions would Eckhardt and McCracken get rid of? For dependents of veterans killed in war or died as the result of injuries incurred at war?

Should charter schools charge tuition like private and parochial schools? Based on the WTE words, no one should expect a free education - "something for nothing."

Would Reed and Mike favor repealing the free tuition and fees provided to survivors or dependents of first responders who died in the performance of their duties?

Perhaps the disabled, those who are deaf, blind or have other physical disabilities? Is that the group the WTE editorialists and decision-makers would abandon?

Students at LCCC are very concerned about a failed president finding a way around the protection of charging tuition for only 12 credits. Instead he wants to charge for all credits taken. That would discourage students who will work extra hard to get more credits than the minimum allowable so they can finish their education faster or get to a real university sooner. Reed Eckhardt is so chafed about his treatment by the governor that he would penalize better students - those he claimed to favor with the Hathaway Scholarship. He has no core principles. And no memory of his past words.

Sales Tax and Unemployment Data for Laramie County

If you believe what some public officials say, the local economy is doing well. Okay, at least. Others lament the situation.

When the City is trying to beg more funds from the State and the State is trying to hold onto every thing it has, it becomes pretty difficult to ascertain the truth.

When the Cheyenne Herald wants the truth, it solicits it from the State of Wyoming Economic Analysis office.

In spite of what a local new car dealership commercial claims, Cheyenne does not "have the lowest unemployment in the nation." In fact, Cheyenne does not even have the lowest unemployment in the state. Not even in the state.

The latest unemployment figures are for March, 2009. Wyoming's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 4.5% in March, up from 3.9% in February. The March unemployment level is the highest since August 2003. The highest rate of unemployment is in Big Horn County (8.7%), with Lincoln (8.0%) and Fremont (7.0%) next. In spite of the local car dealer's fluff, there were 13 counties in Wyoming with unemployment lower than Laramie County's 5.5%. Sublette (3.3%), Albany (3.4%) and Campbell (4.0%) counties are lowest.

While sales and use tax collections (distributions, actually) are all over the place in Wyoming through March, Laramie County is actually flat. When city officials talk about sales tax collections being "behind," they mean behind what they *guessed* they would be (hoped), not behind last year. In fact, through the first nine months of the fiscal year, sales and use tax collection in Laramie County for FY09 was \$47,753,675 compared to \$47,298,264 in FY08.

Surprisingly, with all the new motels, lodging tax collection has run behind last year. One of nine such counties in the state, Laramie County (-3.3%) lags far behind increases in Goshen (13.3%), Natrona (19.2%), Big Horn (19.4%) and Platte (27.5%) counties. In sales and use tax, Converse County leads (+40.9%).

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