

Try To Speak Positively About K-12 Task Force, Members Ask Educators

BY BOB MERCER
STATE CAPITOL BUREAU

SIOUX FALLS – Two state legislators who chair the governor's Blue Ribbon task force on K-12 education said Friday they are optimistic but they asked school board members and school superintendents to be respectful in public about the panel's work.

"If we derail this, it could be a long time before we have another opportunity," Rep. Jacqueline Sly, R-Rapid City, said during a panel discussion at the joint convention of board members and superintendents.

"This is education's time to shine," Sen. Deb Soholt, R-Sioux Falls, said. "I would be so sad if we squander this time that's ahead of us, the next six months."

Soholt and Sly participated in a panel discussion with Becky Guffin, the Aberdeen public schools superintendent, and Eric Stroeder of Mobridge, the new president for the Associated School Boards of South Dakota. All four are task force members.

"Do something positive," Guffin said in response to a question about what she hopes will come from the work. She doesn't want it to cause fighting.

"I hope it's something we can come to grips with and be positive and move forward," Guffin said.

The task force is looking at many topics such as the supply of teachers, South Dakota's last-place rank in average teacher salary, the state's methods of funding public schools and the schools' methods of educating students.

Jim Heinert, who retired as Meade school district's superintendent in 2011, told the panel Friday that the first problem needing attention is restoration of \$50 million that the Legislature cut in state funding for schools in 2011.

Stroeder replied that education in South Dakota has been on "a starvation diet" for many years. At another point, he said: "If they're convinced they're getting a good product, they're willing to pay more."

Task force members held a dozen regional meetings in April, May and June. The full group gathered July 7 in Pierre and meets again on Aug. 19. Two more full meetings are scheduled for Sept. 9 and Oct. 1, with a possible meeting Oct. 29.

Soholt said Friday the task force aims to issue a report in October

so that legislation can be written for the 2016 session that opens in January. The final package probably won't win approval from legislators until the closing weeks in March.

"Don't expect an early done," she said.

Wade Pogany, the executive director for the school boards group, said there is some cynicism and skepticism about whether the task force can develop changes that will be acceptable, after more than a dozen previous studies and panels in recent decades.

Said Guffin, "This time it does feel different."

Soholt asked that people don't call the task force stupid. "Our goal is not to be disappointing. Our goal is to do something amazing for South Dakota," she said.

Finding money will be up to the Legislature, Sly said. But there is also the challenge of using the money to make teaching more attractive.

"What will be ways? That's where it's helpful to hear from people in the field," Sly said. "It's a huge problem we have in our schools when you can't find teachers to fill those classrooms or you have only one or two to choose from."

Guffin said kids have more choices of careers than in the past. "The problem is very real," she said about the declining interest in teaching as a profession. "New jobs are created every day. We're in competition with that," she said.

190 Bills Passed, But More Work Remains

BY REP. KRISTI NOEM

If you read the headlines, it's difficult not to get frustrated with what's happening in our country. Almost every day it seems we open the newspaper or turn on the news or scroll through Facebook to read about a new crisis, more gridlock, or greater dysfunction. It makes you wonder what is going on in this country? That's how I feel sometimes, anyways.

The good news is, however, we aren't standing idly by. Step by step, we're getting things done.

At this point, we're just over halfway through the year. Already, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed 190 bills, far more than the historical average of 125 bills by this point.

The legislative process these bills have undergone has been more open too. Every perspective has had the opportunity to be debated. In fact, the House of Representatives has considered more than 600 amendments, which is double the historical average. The result has been a Congress that is more effective, with 29 bills being enacted into law this year – once again, well above the historical average of 21.

Of course, it's not all about the numbers. The bills that have become law have been meaningful as well. The Clay Hunt Act aims to prevent veteran suicides, which happen at a rate of about 22 per day, by giving veterans better access to mental health resources. The USA Freedom Act strictly limits the NSA's bulk data collection. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which I helped author, represents one of the most expansive anti-human trafficking laws this decade. The Medicare Access and Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act shifts the focus toward the quality of care, not the quantity. And new trade legislation puts strict oversight and accountability restrictions on the administration's trade negotiations.

Additionally, the House has held dozens of oversight hearings, focusing on everything from the IRS's targeting of conservative groups to the 2012 terrorist attack in Benghazi to executive overreach. Together with the Senate, we also passed the first bicameral 10-year balanced budget plan since 2001.

Despite several accomplishments, there are still major issues that must be overcome. In the coming weeks, the House will take up legislation that stops the President's proposed nuclear deal with Iran. While I'm cautiously optimistic we have enough votes to get the legislation through both sides of Congress, we continue to work toward achieving a veto-proof majority that can override the President.

Funding for road and bridge repairs expires in October as well, but we have been working on a real, multi-year fix that may include reforms to at least a portion of the tax code.

Other tax reforms – known as tax extenders – are also on the agenda for the last half of the year. The House has already passed a number of these so-called extenders, including a permanent fix to Section 179 – a section of the tax code that is important to many South Dakota ag producers.

While the House has also pushed forward legislation addressing sanctuary cities, the President's health care law, and immigration, I am doubtful we can find enough common ground with the administration to make responsible changes. Nonetheless, we'll keep pushing our ideas forward.

I am continuously striving for a more efficient, effective, and accountable government. As part of that, I believe it's my responsibility to show you what has been accomplished, while admitting to the challenges that lay ahead. There's a lot of work to be done, but we're making progress – one step at a time.

Randy & Mary Ellen Cammack Will Represent South Dakota For The 2015-2016 Farmers Union Enterprise Couples Leadership Program

"History does repeat itself and we've learned a lot over the years which we can share. And, we still have more to learn from others," Mary Ellen says.

The Cammack's are third generation ranchers. They operate a cow/calf operation, Flying C Ranch, near Sturgis; with their daughter, Shelby. Their other three grown children, Tyler Cammack, Loni Brown and Paige Komes, still have cattle on the ranch, but they have lives and careers off the ranch.

Farmers Union Enterprise Couples Leadership Program

Developed to substantiate and empower future leaders for rural America and Farmers Union, the Farmers Union Enterprise Couples Leadership Program provides training and hands-on experiences which enable couples to become knowledgeable leaders.

"This is the first time either of us have participated in a leadership-focused program together," Mary Ellen explains. "As producers, we spend our days working side-by-side, but that

doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement."

Mary Ellen and Randy have been involved in Farmers Union for several years.

Currently Mary Ellen serves as one of three SDFU members to represent Farmers Union on the Beef Industry Council.

"We respect the fact that Farmers Union continues to focus on supporting family farming and ranching operations, as well as catering to the social needs and well being of the families

involved," Mary Ellen says.

Along with South Dakota, farm couples from the states of North Dakota, Montana, Wisconsin and Minnesota are also involved.

Throughout the year, the couples involved meet five times. The sessions begin with a summer family session where the 2015 participants and their families get to meet with the 2014 class.

The second gathering will be held at one of the participating state's State



IMAGE COURTESY OF S.D. FARMERS UNION

Pictured: Mary Ellen and Randy Cammack

Conventions. The third gathering is held during National Farmers Union Convention.

The fourth gathering is again the Family Session, with the final gathering held in conjunction with the Washington, D.C. Fly-In.

"We have been so impressed with the quality of the individuals who have completed the program and I think Farmers Union and each of their respective communities and states will benefit from these young couples," said Harley Danielson, Farmers Union Enterprise Couples Leadership Program Coordinator.

Following each Farmers Union Enterprise Couples Leadership Program events, Mary Ellen and Randy will share what they learned with Union Farmer readers.

To learn more and find out how you can participate in the 2016 Farmers Union Enterprise Couples Leadership Program, contact Karla Hofhenke at khofhenke@sdfu.org or 605-352-6761 ext: 114.

EQUIPMENT – ANTIQUES – LAWN & GARDEN – TACK
Tuesday August 18th 4 PM
Afternoon Auction
Located: 1/2-mile West of Beresford on SD Hwy 46

EQUIPMENT – LAWN & GARDEN – GOLD CART – 4x4 PICKUP: Super M Farmall, new clutch, wf, SN#33888; Hesston 5580 round baler; JD 24T baler; Miller loader w/ JD mnts; Columbia Harley Davidson customized golf cart, gas, new tires; 1998 Chevy S-10 LS ZR2 ext cab, 4x4, 5sp, 198K miles; Yamaha 660R Raptor 4-wheeler; JD L100 L&G tractor, 42" deck; 17hp; Cub Cadet 50" zero turn; White Zero turn, 42" deck; lawn sweeper, yard cart; 2 lawn spreaders; Coast to Coast push mower;
HORSE – TACK – SIGNS: approx 5x7' fiberglass display horse; Herford Brand-Horseman bar stand w/ double sided sign complete w/ new straps; bits & cinches; Wear Lee Riders double sided tin sign; horse walker, new motor, 2sp; Hesston belt buckles; 3 saddles, 1 side saddle; misc tack; saddle stand; 2 carriage robes; hog oiler; hames table & chairs; walking plow; horse cart; horse shoe Christmas tree;
ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES: Victrola- works; 78 records; music stand; hankiechief dresser; kitchen cabinet w/ secretary ; rocker; Beckwith player piano – works, with rolls; Singer industrial sewing machine; Wards #2 school bell; large safe; Immigrant trunk; camel back trunk; recliner, child's roll top desk & chair; approx 12 mantel clocks – all work; coffee grinder; silverware; 45 records; music books; Ralston toys; jewelry boxes; pink depression; carnival glass; straight razors Lincoln logs; toys; old dolls; calendars; candle holders; doll dishes; pictures; mirrors; M Hohner accordion; dresser set; vintage clothes; spice holders; high chair; fancy work; doll crib; tea set; community plate silverware; typewriter; WWI uniform – complete; helmet; sword; Carl Eichorn bayonet; Lg WWI picture; WWI memorabilia;
GUNS: Mdl 1851 Navy Replica; HSB & Co .410 single shot; BB gun pistol; gun cabinet
FURNITURE – EXERCISE EQUIPMENT– MISC: 2 dinette table & 4 chairs; recliner; occ chair; nic nacs; Kirby vac; lawn chairs; trophies; welcome sign; fountains; trike; sm vise & stand; Delta scroll saw; Xmas dec; Holiday dec; exercise bike; elliptical machine; many items too numerous to mention.

Terms: Cash, Good check, Visa, MasterCard. SD Sales tax applies. Not responsible for accidents. Lunch by Eager Beavers 4-H. See website for many photos.

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