



**David Lias**  
*Between The Lines*

## Too soon to end TARP?

South Dakota Republican Sen. John Thune doesn't like taxes.

He doesn't like deficit spending, either. He's attempting to put an end to the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).

Sen. Thune reiterated his support for terminating the TARP Dec. 8. He would like to prevent the Treasury Department from spending additional funds that would add to the ballooning national debt.

"Although only a fraction of the money from the nearly \$800 billion stimulus bill passed earlier this year has been spent, Democrats in Congress are already looking for ways to spend more," Thune said in a press release this week. "TARP, which has strayed far from what Congress intended, has been a de facto slush fund for months now ..."

It's certainly difficult to fault the senator for taking such a position. He reflects an attitude that is deeply ingrained in most South Dakotans. Cut before you spend. Get by with what you already have. Live simply. Don't be extravagant.

Had Wall Street and other financial industries followed such a philosophy, our economy may not have tanked so severely in late 2008. Of course, other factors were at work back then, too, that only added to our financial woes.

Sen. Thune can argue, with some validity, that TARP isn't working. But it's important to consider one value aspect of the program that's not highly tangible; that doesn't necessarily show up in ledger books.

Elizabeth Warren – head of the Congressional Oversight Panel and fierce critic of Wall Street and the bailouts – delivered a surprise this week. In her opinion, TARP worked (for the most part).

The Congressional Oversight Panel's December oversight report, "Taking Stock: What Has the Troubled Asset Relief Program Achieved?" concludes that TARP was an important part of a broader government strategy that stabilized the U.S. financial system. It is apparent after 14 months, however, that significant underlying weaknesses in the financial system remain.

The Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) was the centerpiece of the federal government's multi-pronged response to the financial crisis. While it is impossible to disentangle TARP from other rescue efforts, it is clear the program played a critical role in renewing the flow of credit and preventing a more acute crisis.

The panel found that this overwhelming fiscal response, however, created an implicit guarantee for major financial institutions that distorts pricing for capital and encourages excessive risk-taking. Unwinding this guarantee poses a difficult long-term challenge.

Before TARP, Wall Street, and subsequently, our economy, was practically at a tipping point. TARP helped restore financial confidence.

In the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (EESA), the law establishing TARP, Congress established broad goals that went beyond the short-term objective of easing the panic. The panel's review found that many ongoing problems identified by Congress remain in the financial markets and broader economy.

Perhaps Sen. Thune has access to financial experts and other resources that back up his desire to see TARP eliminated. However, when Warren, who has been critical of the bailouts, like Thune, notes that TARP seems to be helping, it gives us pause.

We'd love to see our economy rebound quickly. We'd love to see the financial doldrums that have been persistent nationwide for so long finally go away.

We aren't sure that eliminating TARP will have that outcome. Perhaps Sen. Thune should devote his efforts to solving many of the economic problems that still plague our country, rather than eliminating a program that, if nothing else, is maintaining a sense of confidence that is so important right now.



## English is a crazy language

With all the hype going on these days about texting, twittering, etc., plus that commercial you see on television over and over about how easy it is to learn a foreign language with their system, it got me to thinking just how tough it might be to learn the English language.

Here are some phrases using words with duo meanings which makes the English language so hard to understand:

We must polish the Polish furniture.



**Bob Karolevitz**  
*Writer At Large*

He could lead if he would get the lead out.

The bandage was wound around the wound.

The insurance was invalid for the invalid.

The farm was used to produce the produce.

The dump was so full that

it had to refuse more refuse.

When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.

I did not object to the object.

They were too close to the door to close it.

The wind was too strong to wind the sail.

Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.

I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.

There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.

The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.

Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.

Lets face it: English is a crazy language!

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## If there's no room at the inn, where shall they go?

Before I embarked on my first-ever mission experience last weekend, I envisioned homeless adults, not homeless babies.

I was on short-term mission trip called Urban Plunge to the gang-ridden, low-income part of Omaha, NE, commonly referred to as North O.

There are homeless babies in North Omaha. Seven out of 10 residents there are considered poor, and this area has one of the highest number of children living in poverty in the U.S.

Urban Plunge is an inner city immersion experience in which teams of people volunteer at shelters and missions to feed the hungry, pray for the needy, break bread with the homeless and serve the poor.

I encountered homeless men and women who are not really that different from you and me, who have life stories, goals and families of their own.

I discovered numerous ministries operating day and night to make a difference, such as Angels on Wheels, a large team of individuals from a dozen churches, who minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the homeless.

Angels on Wheels vans transport people from shelters and darkened streets to a warm welcoming center, where they eat home-cooked food, watch movies, interact with volunteers, receive job training and take GED prep

### MyStory YourStory



**Paula Damon**  
*Columnist*

classes.

The Hope Center, a defender of children from neglect and gang violence, serves as a home-away-from-home for inner city youth, ages seven to 19. This is an after-school program providing hot meals, recreation, mentoring and help with school work in a safe, nurturing environment.

Hope Center volunteers act as surrogate parents, who are involved in children's lives. They even attend school programs and go to parent-teacher conferences for children whose parents are absent or unavailable. The high school graduation rate in the North Omaha Public School District is approximately 48 percent, while Hope Center youth attending the same schools have a 93 percent high school graduation rate.

Deep within one impoverished neighborhood, where gang signs abound and the sound of gunfire can be heard, is the Mission for All Nations, another faith-based charitable organization. This program exists for the sole purpose of preventing homelessness and hunger. It represents the largest food pantry in Nebraska, feeding

some 22,500 individuals nearly 500,000 meals annually.

At this mission, there's free food, clothing and shelter for people of all ethnic backgrounds who are on the fringes of poverty. Here, Urban Plungers prepared food boxes, sorted used clothing and processed applicants for pantry items. We also contributed blankets and hundreds of personal hygiene necessities donated by our churches.

On the way to Omaha's Eppley Airfield is the Open Door Mission, a Gospel Rescue Mission that meets the basic needs of the homeless and provides life-changing programs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

This place never closes, as it serves more than 300 people daily with emergency temporary housing, long-term rehabilitation, recovery programs and transitional housing. At Open Door Mission, we sorted used clothes, stocked a free thrift store and ate lunch with homeless women and children.

We also went to Release Ministries, which resides inside the Douglas County Youth Jail, behind towering

fences topped with coiled barbed wire and razorblades. This is where Chaplain Ron reaches out to incarcerated high-risk youth who are in the Juvenile Justice System. Through prayer, Bible study and mentoring, Chaplain Ron, a former inmate himself, ministers to young men and women with the goal of turning their lives around.

Before I went on my first-ever mission trip last weekend, I envisioned homeless adults, but not homeless babies. There are homeless babies in North Omaha. I held them, fed them, talked to them, played with them, strolled them and danced with them. I even sang to them....

If you or your church group would like to learn more about Urban Plunge, please call 402-592-8332 or visit [www.urbanplunge.net](http://www.urbanplunge.net).

*A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her columns have won first-place in National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women Communications Contests. In the 2009 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contest, Paula's columns took three first-place awards. To contact Paula, email [pauladamon@iw.net](mailto:pauladamon@iw.net), follow her blog at [www.my-story-your-story.blogspot.com](http://www.my-story-your-story.blogspot.com) and find her on Facebook.*

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Plain Talk encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 350 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the Plain Talk will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, P.O. Box 357, Vermillion, SD 57069, or e-mail us at [david.lias@plaintalk.net](mailto:david.lias@plaintalk.net).



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### Thanks for promoting state

**To the editor:** South Dakota is just coming off its peak tourist season. And, despite a tough economic climate, most travel indicators are showing increased visitation to South Dakota.

The people of South Dakota deserve a pat on the back for that. More than 30,000 South Dakotans work direct-

ly in the visitor industry helping make South Dakota a premier travel destination. What's more, virtually every South Dakotan plays a role in making our state a welcoming and enjoyable vacation spot. Thank you for making South Dakota a hospitable, unique, and relaxing experience for vacationers.

Your work as ambassadors for South Dakota greatly impacts your communities, state, and the economy. Last year, visitors spent more than \$967 million in South Dakota. A recent study commissioned by the South Office of Tourism tells us:

• If tourism didn't exist, each household would have to pay about \$960 more in taxes to maintain the current level of state and local tax receipts.

• Each visitor generates \$76 in wages paid to workers directly employed in tourism.

• Every 342 visitors create

a new job in South Dakota.

With holiday visitors and winter sports enthusiasts visiting South Dakota, we have another chance to spotlight our great state.

I encourage you to keep up the good work in making visitors feel at home in South Dakota.

Sincerely,  
**Richard Benda,**  
Secretary, Department  
of Tourism & State  
Development

### LETTERS