

OPINION

OUR VIEW

It's not broken

Why fix something that's not broken?
That's how we view a challenge of the use of private security officers at the local airport by the Transportation Security Administration.
The challenge, which appears to have delayed security funding provided to the Falls International Airport, earlier prompted city officials to adopt a resolution asking to allow the status quo to continue at the airport.
The resolution is a follow-up to a letter sent by Falls Mayor Bob Anderson earlier seeking the assistance of U.S. Sen. Al Franken in the issue. Anderson serves as the chairman of the local airport commission.

Security at the airport is provided by Northland Investigative and Protective Services Inc. Should the airport lose its subsidy for security, it would be forced to pay an additional \$15,000 per year to the current \$60,000 cost of security. The airport commission has received no reimbursement for the cost of airport security since October 2012.
At issue is TSA's requirement that deputized law officers be present when passengers are screened at the airport. Northland Investigative and Protective Services Inc. employs retired law enforcement officers who are certified by the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training, known as POST, and can carry weapons.
The firm and the officers have an excellent record, say local airport officials, who add that there have been no incidents or security breaches at the Falls International Airport.
Local officials say the current security system at the airport has worked well, with local county and city law enforcement officers called if there is an incident requires an arrest. The private security officers do not have the authority to make arrests because of liability and insurance requirements involved.
Clearly, it's to everyone's benefit to have a secure airport, and no evidence has been presented to say that the current system used at the Falls International Airport is failing.
Like we said before, if something's not broken, why spend energy and local resources in attempt to fix it? TSA should drop its concerns, the airport should get its subsidy and we should move forward.

FIRST AMENDMENT "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Marriage is good for children

To the editor,
Statistically, children born inside of marriage are far less likely to live in poverty. Our communities would do well to promote strong marriages for the well being of the next generation. Too often legislation that is written to "help the poor" translates into marriage penalties. Government assistance is guaranteed to poor mothers so long as parents remain unwed and fathers stay away from the home. Do the legislators, for whom you voted, promote strong marriages?
Natural law demonstrates that marriage is between a man and a woman. Natural law also demonstrates that

the father is to provide for and protect the offspring that he helped bring into this world. Unfortunately, contemporary society is mesmerized by the unnatural. We exchange that which is natural and honorable for that which is unnatural and dishonorable. Our foolish hearts are darkened. By blurring natural law we lose track of what is right and wrong. Biological fathers are indirectly encouraged to be absent because 'Father Government' will take care of their newborns, from the cradle to their grave. The result is that these kids suffer. Not only does the cycle of poverty continue, but it spirals

downward.
By contrast, children reared in married homes are half as likely to be arrested for juvenile crime, half as likely to be treated for behavioral problems, half as likely to be expelled from school and far less likely to drop out of high school. Clearly, it is counterproductive to "help the poor" by incentivizing irresponsibility. The families with fathers who choose to step up, to wed and to work should not be penalized when they are doing what is best for their kids and for the well being of the next generation.
Pastor Cory J. Rintala
Ray, MN

How to contact your lawmakers

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Repeal all three B2B taxes now

To the editor,
Gov. Mark Dayton has tentatively called a special session of the Legislature for Sept. 9 to consider disaster relief and repeal of the business-to-business sales tax on farm equipment repairs. That's a good start, but it falls short of what is needed to keep Minnesota companies competitive. All three B2B taxes should be repealed now – including purchases of telecommunications equipment by telecommunications providers, and storage and warehouse services.
Businesses are in the midst of making decisions for next year. They cannot depend on the promise of a vote to be taken by the 2014 Legislature. These new taxes translate into higher prices, lower wages and lost jobs. All Minnesotans are affected.
At a time when our local community is feeling

the reality of job loss and understands the dire need to be competitive in a global economy today, these state laws put us at a distinct disadvantage to any organization evaluating International Falls against any other non-Minnesota community or location.
We should all urge our legislators to remove these taxes immediately.
Christa Heibel
International Falls, MN

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Stopping obesity more than a crash diet

Change in the childhood obesity rate is coming slowly but surely, much like a change in lifestyle rather than a crash diet.
Minnesota was among the states to receive the good news that its childhood obesity rate has dropped. The rate among low-income Minnesota children fell from 13.4 percent in 2008 to 12.6 percent in 2011. The biggest declines in the nation were in Florida, Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey and South Dakota. Each saw their obesity numbers fall at least 1 percentage point.
The reason for the drop isn't clear cut, with a number of factors likely coming into play; but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cited a probable link to a change in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, which provides food vouchers and other services to low-income families. The program eliminated juice from infant food packages, provided less saturated fat and made it easier to buy fruits and vegetables, including the acceptance of the vouchers at farmers markets.
Another possible explanation, according to health experts, is that breast-feeding rates have been increasing, and kids raised on mother's milk tend to have lower obesity rates. Preschoolers who are overweight or obese are five times more likely than other children to be heavy as adults, which means higher risk of chronic health problems.
The amount of information circulating about the dangers of obesity are likely a factor behind people changing their behavior. Education about the dangers of excessive sugar consumption have reached enough people that the soda companies are doing the mad scramble to figure out a way to make up revenue losses.
The drop in childhood obesity rates obviously is great news and reveals education efforts and food program changes do have an effect. The CDC is stressing that partnerships with community groups and child care providers is a stepping stone to a lifetime of healthy habits. In Minnesota the Parent Aware program, which began as a pilot program here and is now expanding statewide, works with day cares and preschools to develop quality curriculum, including stressing the importance of good nutrition and exercise.
Yet, clearly there is still much work to do when it comes to curbing this epidemic. From

teaching very young children good eating and exercise habits at home and school to making a stand with our pocketbooks by buying healthier products, the fight against obesity is ongoing.
Area residents are lucky to have access to healthier foods through its farmers markets and community gardens, including produce donated to low-income residents who use the ECHO Food Shelf. The BackPack Food Program provides children from low-income families nutritious snacks during weekends and school breaks when school meals are not available. And the Minnesota Valley Action Council is proposing a food hub concept in which the hub would purchase food from local farmers and then sell it to hospitals, public schools, colleges and restaurants. The idea is to make locally produced food more available on a larger scale.
Making healthy, flavorful food more readily available and more the norm than the exception is a key ingredient to getting children on the road to good health for a lifetime. Curing childhood obesity is a cultural shift, not a crash diet.
The Free Press of Mankato, Aug. 19

Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal's Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.