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## Letters to the Editor: Feb. 6

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**THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER**
  
 Posted Feb 06, 2009 @ 12:05 AM

The Jan. 28 State Journal-Register seemed critical of the Sangamon County sheriff for not releasing information to the media during the course of a pending investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of a sheriff's deputy on New Year's Day.

The article noted, "Sheriff (Neil) Williamson won't say what explanation the deputy might have given, nor will the sheriff answer any other questions about the case." We believe the sheriff's declining comment while an investigation is under way is exactly the course of action he should follow.

While a citizen's claim that a law enforcement officer "took advantage of her" makes for an eye-catching headline, it does not justify releasing any information prior to the conclusion of the department's investigation and the determination whether the allegation has any merit.

Law enforcement officers accept that they are held to a higher standard of conduct at work than the ordinary person. However, that higher standard of conduct does not carry with it a lower standard of basic rights.

Why should the sheriff publicly release what the officer said, what the complainant said, what the evidence shows thus far, what evidence remains to be considered or any other aspect of the department's investigation? The department would not release information regarding an ongoing investigation into allegations of misconduct by anyone else, so why do so if it involves the police?

Criminal investigations take time, particularly when it is the alleged victim's word against the word of the accused. Unfortunately, most real life cases cannot be wrapped up in 60 minutes (less commercial interruptions) like they are on television.

When the investigation is over and the department has determined whether the alleged victim's claims are baseless or true and whether or not a criminal charge should be filed will be soon enough for the "facts" of the case to trickle out through the media. In the interim, why don't we just let Sheriff Williamson and his investigators do their job?

*Becky Dragoo*
  
 Field supervisor
   
 Illinois FOP Labor Council

### Burris must wait for Durbin to tell him how to vote

Wanting to voice my advice concerning the stimulus bill, I telephoned both our senators' Washington offices on Tuesday.

I reached Sen. Dick Durbin's phone bank and was informed that all lines were busy. I chose to use my computer and sent my message via e-mail. I could have used his fax number.

Sen. Roland Burris' office had one phone line, which seemed to be off the hook. Burris had no e-mail address and no fax line. I guess he doesn't need to talk to constituents; he just waits for Durbin to tell him how to vote.

*Wayne Lovern*
  
 Chatham

### Event Calendar

| FRI | SAT | SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 06  | 07  | 08  | 09  | 10  | 11  | 12  |

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[Don Smith Quartet : Mariah's](#)
  
[Rewind : Lime Street Cafe](#)
  
[More Events](#)

### Most commented stories last 24 hours

1. New DNR director named (31)
2. Granberg says he doesn't know if his pension will rise (27)
3. Smoking ban enforcement falls to sheriff (24)
4. Wisconsin hands cold-shooting Illinois fourth consecutive away loss (23)
5. Governor signs bill clarifying state's smoking ban

- [Prairie State Outdoors](#)
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Britt: Cartoon about Blagojevich's appearance on Letterman (02/06/09)

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**Where shooting victim went to school unimportant**

Regarding the article about the Springfield High School shooting victim in Wednesday's paper: Reporting what happened is story enough. Where the victim attended school had nothing to do with it but draws attention to a school where the majority of students are at home around 7:30 p.m. doing homework or working a part-time job or attending a sporting event.

Your article states "school psychologists and social workers mobilize after such incidents and provide counseling to anyone who needs it." I hope these professionals also talk to the students about making good choices and being responsible for them.

*Linda Stecker  
Springfield*

**Local funeral director reassures public**

One of our goals at Butler Funeral Homes is to serve as a resource for our community. As such, we have always felt a responsibility to comment when an issue relating to our profession arises. Thus, we would like to alleviate concerns raised by the articles regarding the Illinois Funeral Directors Association Trust published on Feb. 1 and Feb. 4.

The headlines, as well as some of the statements made throughout the articles, may have frightened the public.

First and foremost, it should be noted that the six funeral homes that filed a lawsuit against IFDA are not Springfield-based and local firms may or may not participate in the IFDA Trust.

It is also important to know that funeral homes take seriously their fiduciary duty to protect consumer funds. Many consumer-friendly funeral prepayment options are available through funeral homes, and many funeral homes have advance planning specialists who help families make good choices based on the needs of the family.

The benefits of advance planning should not be overshadowed by the events at IFDA. We have seen how comforting it can be to families at the time of death to know that advance funeral plans exist for their loved one. This comfort can exist in knowing that they are carrying out the wishes of their loved one or that financial matters are under control.

Butler Funeral Homes, along with other reputable funeral firms, stand behind the funeral arrangements that have been made in advance and will ensure that all plans are provided for.

More than 5,000 funerals are performed each day in the United States in an honest and ethical manner, a testament to the obligation that reputable funeral providers feel toward those who entrust us with their care or the care of their loved ones.

*Chris Butler  
Butler Funeral Homes*

**Geithner's tax error is a common mistake**

In his letter of Jan. 26, Timothy Souther reinforced a common misunderstanding of the tax problems of Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner — the belief that Geithner failed to pay income taxes due on the salary he received from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In fact, Geithner did pay his income taxes. It was his Social Security and Medicare taxes that created the problem. Most employers deduct those taxes and send them directly to the federal government. But the IMF treats its employees as independent contractors and does not make these deductions. Instead, employees are responsible for paying both their own share and the employer's share of FICA taxes.

Many people who consider themselves employees, but who are treated as independent contractors by their employer, make some kind of error in paying FICA taxes. These errors are routinely treated as mistakes and not as intentional wrongdoing by the IRS.

Interestingly enough, in recent years Republicans have often ignored payment of FICA taxes in deciding who should be entitled to relief under Republican tax cut plans.

*Barbara Hayler  
Springfield*

**Marijuana law a step in the right direction**

I would like to thank the Springfield City Council for passing the ordinance to allow officers to issue a citation for low-level cannabis offenses. Cannabis use is not the demonic substance that it has been portrayed in the past and, in fact, it is a plant that can be very helpful to many people suffering from a wide range of conditions. Many people who use cannabis are responsible, motivated and respectable people.

Cannabis could be a viable tax source and more local municipalities are beginning to notice as demonstrated by the number of cities issuing fines instead of wasting time arresting and prosecuting every low-level cannabis offense. These fines are just the fringe of the potential money the government could be making in excise taxes if cannabis were legal.

- Our Opinion: Granberg has a chance to put ethics first (02/06/09)
- Our Opinion: No ignoring smoking ban (02/06/09)
- Letters to the Editor: Feb. 6 (02/06/09)
- Andy McKenna: Demise of Republican Party is greatly exaggerated (02/06/09)
- Charles Krauthammer: Well, that didn't last long (02/06/09)
- E.J. Dionne: Obama quickly decides to play hardball (02/06/09)
- Ann Coulter: Times story on single motherhood a real puff piece (02/06/09)
- Britt: Cartoon about how taxpayers got stuck with Wall St. bonuses (02/05/09)
- Our Opinion: Reopening historic sites is imperative (02/05/09)

Cannabis is a documented medicine, hypocritically outlawed and wrongly classified by the federal government as a schedule 1 narcotic, while at the same time patent No. 6,630,507 is held by the United States of America as represented by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Cannabis prohibition has failed, but at least Springfield City Council and the police department have taken a much-needed step in preventing the stigmatization of low-level cannabis users.

*Dan Linn  
Executive director  
National Organization  
to Reform Marijuana Laws  
Illinois chapter*

#### **A shame Schock voted against AllKids**

Things just got brighter for hundreds of thousands of Illinois parents worried about keeping their kids healthy and making ends meet as the recession deepens, despite the opposition of Rep. Aaron Schock, R-Peoria.

The U.S. House voted recently to strengthen AllKids, which covers Illinois children whose parents work or have lost their jobs but cannot find affordable coverage for the kids. This legislation would ensure that, as job losses increase the need, AllKids will be there to help. And the bill responds to the economic crisis, with increased federal funding to reward states that invest right now in covering uninsured kids. The U.S. Senate will consider AllKids legislation as early as this week.

Eighty percent of Americans support federal-state children's coverage partnerships like AllKids, according to a recent First Focus poll. The commanding 289-139 victory margin in the House reflected the bipartisan support AllKids' success has earned. AllKids covers nearly 1.2 million Illinois children who would otherwise be uninsured.

And AllKids allocates scarce health dollars wisely, investing in preventive care instead of expensive emergency room treatment. AllKids also brings federal funding into Illinois, providing both a badly needed boost for our economy and some breathing room in our state's budget.

More Americans worry about paying medical bills than paying their mortgage, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation study. With the recession hitting Illinois hard, that is likely to continue. When Ray LaHood represented the district and before we were in this troubled economy, his assessment of the constituents' needs told him to vote "yes" for this legislation in 2007. It is disappointing that one of Schock's first votes in Congress was so dramatically out of touch with the priorities of Republicans and Democrats in Illinois.

*John Bouman  
President  
Sargent Shriver National Center  
on Poverty Law  
Chicago  
Bruce Lesley  
President  
First Focus  
Washington, D.C.*

#### **State needs to adopt 'clean elections' model**

Illinois has long been referred to as the Wild West of campaign finance. The state has few laws to regulate campaigns and has a political culture that is quite tolerant of scandal. If indicted, former Gov. Rod Blagojevich would be the fifth of the last eight elected Illinois governors to be charged with a crime. If he is sent to jail, the fourth to serve time.

Today's crisis in Illinois paralyzes the public trust and government's ability to work on behalf of the people's interests. In order to rebuild state government, Illinois requires sweeping reforms; the clean election model of campaign finance reform represents a policy approach that can effectively repair faith in government and ultimately salvage our sinking democracy.

Voters given the choice choose publicly financed candidates. Eighty-one percent of the next General Assembly in Connecticut will be publicly financed officials, following the state's first general election utilizing the program, which was instituted in response to a major campaign scandal involving the state's former governor.

Citizen Action/Illinois is working in the Illinois legislature to put forward a similar proposal to establish a system of small contribution-driven, publicly financed campaigns in Illinois.

As Illinois prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of birth of Abraham Lincoln, we can call on our elected officials to support "clean elections" proposals in Springfield. It is time for the residents of the Land of Lincoln to take back state government from the special interests.

By adopting a clean election model in Illinois, candidates may better harness the power of small political donors, making a contribution from a factory worker or a waitress just as valuable as one from a lobbyist or corporate chief executive.

Lynda DeLaForgue  
Co-Director  
Citizen Action/Illinois  
Chicago

#### Leave funds for diesel cleanup in 'stimulus'

Critics of the economic stimulus package complain that money in the package will be wasted on programs that will not actually lift us out of the recession; however, funding for the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) will not only create jobs, but will help build our infrastructure in a responsible manner.

Diesel engines are the workhorses of our nation, but the black exhaust emitted from them is a threat to the public's health and contributes to climate change. Dirty diesel soot triggers asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes, lung cancer and even premature deaths. The black carbon from diesel pollution may be more than 600 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Funding for the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) will help local school districts, transit agencies and governments pay for pollution controls that can eliminate up to 90 percent of soot from a diesel engine. Consequently, companies like Illinois-based Caterpillar that manufacture these pollution controls are sure to benefit from funding for diesel cleanup.

It is time for our elected leaders to step up to the plate and deliver jobs that will not only build our infrastructure but also protect our health and environment by supporting programs like DERA in the economic stimulus package.

Emily Stuart  
Organizer  
Citizen Action/Illinois

#### Wind is blowing in right direction for energy

Bloomberg reported that the Global Wind Energy Council said the United States increased its wind-generating capacity last year by 50 percent to 25 gigawatts. The United States is now the world's largest producer of wind electricity with about 21 percent of global capacity.

Let's hope that we are as successful in 2009 (under President Obama) as we were in 2008 (under President Bush).

Richard F. Rogal  
Springfield

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Comments (14)

**Byron**

6 hours ago

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'A shame Schock voted against AllKids' ? Is it really? The Government is already in debt so how are we to pay for Allkids? I agree that it is needed but we don't have the money. In order to get out of debt you have to do two things 1) stop spending and 2) increase income. For the Government to increase income it means more taxes. More people are out of work so that means a decrease in income tax revenue so the Government has less money to fund Allkids. I agree with Schock's decision.

Mr. Bouman, can you give us any good, workable suggestions on how to fund Allkids?

**John Q Public**

5 hours ago

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Here is a little more insight on AllKids...Funding the program has never been an issue because the providers (doctors, hospitals, et al) don't actually get paid for their services. The are just told to write off the charges. This is why most doctors don't sign on as providers for Medicaid and AllKids.

**bwo**

5 hours ago

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Barbara Hayler

by all means tell us who these republicans are .you have proof lets have it, if they cheated on their taxes we wantto know,

**Fresh Prince Of Bill Ayers**

5 hours ago

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Good morning.

Look for a queasy day in the market. The futures are mixed, the Nikkei and Hang Seng were up, but bad employment news is due out today and the President continues to bash the economy to try to panic enough votes to get his massive movement to Marxism.

Documented tax cheat Tim Geithner still has no clue what to do about the banking situation. So far he has coasted on the moves done by Paulson, and the market is losing patience with him.

Something else to consider. The Messiah has yet to identify a Car Czar, so GM and Chrysler have had no one to work with in restructuring their organizations. Therefore, get ready for another \$15 billion handout to the car companies to buy the Administration another 2 or 3 months to get their act together on this.

In the meantime the President,with a clear majority in both houses, demagogues the Republicans trying to get his pork bill

passed. He can point fingers at others, he can make high sounding hiring policies that he then ignores, and give good speeches, but he has no idea how to lead.

Can we stop giving him the benefit of the doubt yet?

(hat tip: 3 Wood @ Igf

**duffer**

4 hours ago

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Barbara is lost. Geithner was given the money, in addition to his salary, for the sole purpose of paying his employment taxes. He chose to pocket that extra money. He lied at the confirmation hearings about it.

A little biased aren't we Barbara? As in bwo's post, I don't care which party they are members of, when it comes to being a liar, cheater, or a thief, which Geithner clearly is, I want them held accountable.

**tweetybird**

4 hours ago

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If the Govt would stop giving the officials outrageously high salaries and skyrocketing payraises every year we'd have more money to spend on what's really important in this country. STOP SENDING OUR MONEY AND OUR GOODS OVERSEAS. We need them here to take care of OUR people.

**conservguy**

4 hours ago

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Barbara Hayler - exactly what one would expect from a Democrat attempting to rationalize the indefensible acts of one of your guys, simply leave out the pertinent details. As duffer points out, Geithner's employer not only gave all employees an extra check each year specifically for the purpose of covering their FICA tax liability, they gave him an annual statement confirming his earnings and potential taxes, and he had to sign a form acknowledging that he understood, in order to receive the special check.....which he did multiple times. He was flat out trying to cheat, there can be no other logical conclusion. And he tried to blame it on using Turbo Tax? And as just one more add on, he also claimed his kid's overnight summer camp as deductible day care expenses.....which was clearly an intentional, and clearly incorrect, move.

The fact that multiple Obama nominees have now acknowledged tax confusion and oversights, including this guy who is now going to be the boss of the IRS, offers the new Prez a perfect opportunity to do one smart thing that would get him massive approval.....scrap the whole current tax code, and write a new simplified one from scratch!

**bwo**

3 hours ago

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conservguy,

my vote is for the fair tax, even drug dealers and yes even democrat cabinet nominees would be tax paying citizens again.

now that's change I can believe in.

hey barb.

before someone writes in with republican names they should also note that when the republican was caught they were chucked aside by the party, unlike the democrats that wear such things as a badge of honor.

lets see a show of hands out there, who believes that little tommy dashel decided on his own to give up the cabinet nomination,

I say Obama missed a good chance to show his courage in leadership and tell us the truth, that he told little tommy to take a hike, I would have respected him for that.

**degree**

3 hours ago

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Wind energy is the future! Clean, quiet and homegrown! If we would all install private wind towers, solar panels and insulate our home properly we can begin the proper steps to an independent America and a freer America. What American, Republican or Democrat, would disagree with such an act of self-reliance? !!!

**bwo**

2 hours ago

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for every household and apartment in America To have a wind turbine or solar panel big enough to power a house is absurd, I don't have much love for the French but they tried such a thing and found that nuclear power was the way to go. clean coal and nuclear power is our way out of foreign oil imports along with domestic drilling, drill here drill now.

**degree**

2 hours ago

[Report Abuse](#)

Once again, you choose the finite and dirty source of coal over wind and solar. Once again, you choose potentially hazardous nuclear energy over infinite wind and solar power. Myopic and irresponsible!

**GMc**

2 hours ago

[Report Abuse](#)

Byron took the words right out of my mouth. We need more people, especially in government, who realize that the government coffers must not be looked upon as an infinite source of funds that will solve everyone's problems.

**Like it or not**

1 hour ago

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Barb Hayler... 'Interestingly enough, in recent years Republicans have often ignored payment of FICA taxes ' you'll have to do better than that. I too would like to know exactly who you are talking about. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, should immediately step down, and as far as I'm concerned Obama should request a mandatory IRS audit of every member of Congress and that includes himself. Obama talked of nothing but change during his campaign and now the taxpayer wants to see a bit of that change.

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