

# THE PUBLIC PULSE

## More school may not be answer

President Barack Obama has been pushing for more school for American schoolchildren. As a former student in Omaha and now a teacher in South Korea, I believe this is a bad idea.

Asian students may do better in the sciences than American students, but this comes at a very steep price. My students arrive at school by 8:10 a.m., and some of them don't go home until 11 p.m.

Between public school and private academies, these children have no time for themselves.

I believe the United States is a much better nation when U.S. students score 90 percent across the board and are creative, unique individuals, rather than scoring 99 percent in the sciences at the expense of the social sciences while not having a unique existence.

Nathan Rice, *Seoul, South Korea*

## Majority vote should be enough

After a health care bill is ready for a final vote, we will be able to determine if it would make health care more affordable, reliable and effective for all American citizens.

A strong majority of Americans favor health care reform that will fix serious problems in the current system. Sixty percent of U.S. senators are Democrats — enough to pass health care reform without any Republican votes.

However, no matter how good the final bill may be, U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., has said he will not vote for it unless it has the approval of several Republican senators.

If this way of thinking makes sense, why not ask Nebraska's football team to never cross the goal line again without the approval of several players on the opposing team?

Jon Traudt, *Omaha*

## Don't institutionalize disabled

In response to a Sept. 26 news story, "Beatrice center nears losing funds," I believe a basic understanding of civil rights leads to the conclusion that it is questionable to utilize state institutions as warehouses for people with developmental disabilities.

These institutions are a shameful relic of failed public policy and outdated attitudes toward people with disabilities. Institutions that warehouse people with disabilities across the country are the focus of failed inspections, horrendous findings that detail substandard care, class-action lawsuits and decertifications.

There are many other existing and proposed initiatives that support de-institu-

tionalization. These include the Americans With Disabilities Act, the New Freedom Initiatives, the Olmstead Plans, the Lifespan Respite Care Act, the Expanding the Promise for Individuals With Autism Act, the Pathways to Independence Act, and the Family and Workplace Balancing Act.

The institutional bias is not reflective of American attitudes. People want to stay in their homes and communities, regardless of disability at any age.

Robert Stack, *Princeton, N.J.*  
President and chief executive officer  
Community Options Inc.

## Too many driving distractions

I agree that texting while driving is dangerous (Oct. 2 news story), but so is being on the cell phone, smoking, drinking or eating anything, changing the radio station and the distraction of kids in the back seat while driving.

Should there be laws against all of these, too? Should radios no longer be allowed in vehicles? Should noisy kids be banned from riding in cars with only one adult in the car?

There is validity to all of this, and it is ridiculous at the same time. I am guilty of some of the above actions, just like most of the rest of us have probably done some of them, too.

Rick Whiteley, *Omaha*

## Penalties seem inappropriate

I agree that Eleazar Rangel-Ochoa ("Illegal immigrant faces prison in girl's death,"

Sept. 30 news story) deserves prison time.

However, I find it reprehensible that he faces five years for the relatively mild infraction of driving with a suspended license but only one year in prison for motor vehicle homicide.

It is a very sad commentary on our justice system and societal values when the penalty for causing someone's death, even unintentionally, is less than that for the underlying offense.

If Rangel-Ochoa is going to face only six years, the terms should be reversed for the crimes. It is exactly this "life is cheap" attitude that contributes to the overall escalating incidence of violence in our communities and country.

Nathan Brei, *Omaha*

## Wrong to jump to conclusions

I owe Bruce E. Johansen (Sept. 23 Midlands Voices) an apology. He rightly criticized me (Sept. 30 Pulse) for drawing a conclusion without having sufficient evidence that he does practice what he preaches.

He is right that forming conclusions without sufficient information generally leads to wrong conclusions, and that is the point that I was making in my Sept. 26 letter regarding his Sept. 23 essay.

I believe our ability to monitor and record global temperatures accurately, sufficiently and extensively is empirically insufficient to draw absolute conclusions about global warming.

Stephen Watson, *Fremont, Neb.*

## Hunting is a means to an end

In response to Donald Gappa's Sept. 30 letter about killing and slaughtering defenseless animals being a sport, I would say that it is not a sport but a way of life.

When I get up at 5 a.m. to prepare to go deer hunting, I am tackling many obstacles, not just going out to kill a deer.

While sitting in the woods in a tree stand for six hours or longer, I get to see the sun rise as well as various wild creatures (which I don't kill). I also am able to have my time with God. I spend more time reading my Bible and praying than at any other time of the year.

Killing has no joy, but to be able to take my 4-year-old hunting and teach him about God's creations and spend good-quality time with him means more than any trophy buck.

If my hunting trips help me to keep my children out of video stores, off the Internet, out of harm's way and out on the land that God created for us to use, I am fulfilling one of my many duties as a father.

Mike K. Anderson, *Papillion*