

Issues That I Support and Will Work For

Healthcare: Everyone wants good healthcare that is affordable. Obviously, the last part is the issue. Let's see how we compare to the rest of the world on healthcare.

The US World Health Organization has two interesting stats, both published in 2016. First, is the ranking of world healthcare systems, where the US ranks 37th (number 36 is Costa Rica). Second, is life expectancy, where the US ranks 31st (and Costa Rica again outranks us at #30).

OK, let's look at spending per capita. According to the OECD's 2016 report, we spend an average of \$9024.00 per person. France (who has the #1 healthcare system), Germany, Canada, UK and Japan are all spending less than half what we spend – and all have much better results.

Why is our healthcare so expensive? Sure, our Doctors and nurses are paid well. But that's not the real reason. There is a federal law that requires all hospitals to treat anyone that walks through the door. If you are poor and without insurance, that is where you go for a sore throat or a minor cut. Cost: About \$2500. The hospital then increases the rates to insurers to cover this expense. In other words, the rest of us are paying for this.

A simple option is to allow walk-in clinics to treat minor medical issues for anyone without medical insurance, and if it really is serious, refer them to a hospital. Cost: About \$150. Will this cost money to the state? Yes. Will it save money for Coloradans? Yes.

What if all the money that is paid into health insurance companies by businesses, local, state and federal governments and individuals was instead paid into a general medical insurance fund? The probable result would be lower costs, better care and longer life. But this is Healthcare for all – a tough sell in our legislature.

Can this be done at the state level? Mitt Romney did it in Massachusetts, and it worked great! On the federal level, Obama Care was hated, but the Affordable Care Act is loved (obviously, a communication issue). A massive legislative bill won't happen. But small solutions can be done one bill at a time, such as

increasing the use of walk-in clinics or advertising to the uninsured medical options that are available, such as Medicaid.

Our Economy: Yes, our economy is doing very well (ranked #1 by US News & World Report/McKinsey data). Unemployment is low and wages are starting to rise. But, this economy isn't working for everyone. If you do not have at least a high school education and have not learned a skill, you are pretty much relegated to a low skill, low income job (typically without benefits).

Colorado has voted for an increase in the minimum wage. The naysayers immediately said this was the end of the world as we knew it. Our increase went into effect in January and the jobs kept growing. Cities around the country have implemented minimum wages of \$15.00 an hour. Nothing bad happened.

Well, actually, something did happen. These unskilled workers suddenly were raised out of poverty. They didn't need food stamps. Maybe they could afford insurance. At least they could afford a walk-in-clinic when they needed a Doctor. And, maybe they could afford to go to a community college or get into an apprentice program?

Which, of course, brings up the question. Why aren't all of our community colleges offering apprentice programs and/or technical training? Should this be a cooperative effort between our Colorado government and business? Yes, without question. We need to offer courses that business needs and can't find workers to fill.

Education: TABOR has unintentionally crushed our education system. This must be fixed. Our investment in education per capita is one of the lowest in the country. Our teacher pay is ranked 45th out of 50 states. Education is the key to financial wellbeing and success. Why on earth wouldn't we invest in this?

Yes, we need to put apprentice and technical training into our Community Colleges. But, I would also suggest that we encourage potential students with limited resources to go to their Community College for their first 2 years and then transfer to a 4 year college for their degree. Much less expensive and the student can see if they are cut out for college. If not, change their major to an apprentice program or a technical skill. Let's keep in mind that not every person wants or

should go to college. However, that doesn't mean they shouldn't maximize their education to match their ability.

Environment: Most of us live in Colorado by choice. If the military or your job sent you here, you are truly a lucky person. We live in a beautiful state, with virtually everything you could imagine for outdoor sports: Skiing, hiking or just driving through the mountains. The air is clean and we have 300+ sunny days a year. Bugs, not very many, because we have a semi-arid climate.

Yes, I do believe in science and Global Warming. And, realistically, there isn't a whole lot we can do about it here in Colorado. We all have awakened to smoke filled skies, not from our forest fires, but from forest fires in New Mexico or California. Pollution travels across state borders.

However, we can, legislatively, encourage doing better things for our environment. My wife and I recycle. And, last year we put up solar panels on our roof. Will this make a big difference in the environment and stopping pollution? No, but we believe that it is a step in the right direction.

Immigration: Immigration, of course, is a hot button for both political parties and most independents. On the left, the voice seems to be "let everyone one in – we are a country of immigrants." On the right we hear "let no one in – they might be terrorists or just poor, and be a drag on our economy."

Well, historically, we are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Even the Indians came here over the Bering Strait from Asia during the Ice Age. Humans most likely originated in Africa, and therefore, had to get here some way.

Historically, US immigration has been bigoted. In 1924 the Johnson-Reed Act limited new immigration from any country to 2% of "that country's" then registered population in the US as of the census of 1890 (yes, they had 3 newer censuses they could have chosen instead of 1890). The purpose was to stop Southern and Eastern Europeans from coming to the US – especially Italians, Arabs, Asians, Slavs, Jews and Africans. Before this we had open borders.

The 1965 Hart-Cellar Act opened up immigration to Northern and Western Europeans, but still blocked Asians and Africans. It also codified that no homosexuals would be allowed, being they were "mentally defective and constitutional psychopathic infertility" people.

In 1986 the Immigration and Control Act limited Mexicans from immigrating to the US. This immediately led to illegal immigration. I'm sure this was an unintended consequence, but never the less, the federal government created the problem with this law.

The answer? I'm not sure. However, historically, immigrants have made our great country the melting pot that it is today. More cultures yielding more ideas has always been good for our democracy.

Justice: Law and order is a position that everyone can get behind. But, real justice is not the same thing.

There are many laws on the books that had unintentional consequences. The worst example are the drug laws and the minimum sentencing requirements. Why? One, incarceration is expensive. In fact, you could send a convicted felon to some colleges for less, with obviously a better outcome.

More importantly, we are sending minorities and the poor much more frequently to jail than the rich or Caucasian, even though they do the same crime and have the same criminal history (or lack thereof). This isn't right. Plus, once you are convicted of a felony (like being caught with one joint before it was legalized here in Colorado) you can't vote and are going to have a really difficult time getting a job, or even rent an apartment. Race and income shouldn't define our judicial system.

If you have a comment or suggestion on any of my beliefs or positions, please e-mail me at kent@KentJarnig4HD20.org. I will respond, and when appropriate, update my comments here. I can't agree with everyone, but I will always have an open mind to listen to your views.