



THE RIGHT TO FARM AMENDMENT



"Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to ensure that the right of Missouri citizens to engage in agricultural production and ranching practices shall not be infringed."

"A 'yes' vote will amend the Missouri Constitution to guarantee the rights of Missourians to engage in farming and ranching practice, subject to any power given to local government under Article VI of the Missouri Constitution."

ACCORDING TO SOS.MO.GOV

Reflections of an outgoing senior



John Riti

If we're to believe the categories found at greeting card stands, life is lived in stages. We let occasions define our lives, one big moment following another. Moments like birthdays, graduations and weddings are the origins for the stages of life that will stand out as markers on the timeline of our existence.

Perhaps this is why I'd say I'm not necessarily looking forward to graduation this May — the curtain is closing on a stage of life that I feel the world is forcing me to say goodbye to, and I'm quickly finding there's no intermission before the next act.

I think I knew for sure I'd entered panic mode about graduation when I attended a concert in St. Louis last week, and all I could do while watching the opening band perform was debate in my mind whether or not these unrecognized musicians had health insurance. After all, the modern world is so cruel and unforgiving and anyone officially entering it has to think about such things — right?

My opposition to graduation mainly is because it forces me to say goodbye to a community that truly is one-of-a-kind. A community where all your friends and the people you want to become friends with live within walking distance of you. A community where your "job" as a student — in my case, at least — is to read Jhumpa Lahiri novels and write essays about postcolonialism. A community where you can find comfort in the feeling that people are in the same boat as you. Not sure what you want to do in a year? The majority of people who walk this campus probably would say the same.

There's something special about being surrounded by people who are just like you — on the cusp of something, anything, whatever that might be.

Yes, there are those over-achievers who've had a job locked down since sophomore year, and to you all I beg you — find me on LinkedIn and help me out.

For most of us, though, we have yet to do the greatest things of our lives, which is at once nerve-racking and thrilling, and this is what I'm trying to focus on during my final weeks in Kirksville.

It's this notion of leaving a place that consists of these types of people and provides such comfort that gives me reason for dreading the final curtain that is graduation — because I'm not sure if there's any way of obtaining this sense of community in the post-grad world.

Yet, if I can stop my worrying for a minute and think of anything I've taken away from spending the last four years in the liberal arts, it's I always can change my mind about the direction I want to take. I can dabble in anything and I feel I can take solace in the idea of opportunity at any stage of life — this is the mindset I want moving forward and I'm grateful to Truman State for instilling that in me.

Feeling scared is normal, but what I ultimately want others who join me on the brink of graduation to feel is a sense of possibility, not a sense of finality. The community you get in college is a fleeting experience, one that isn't built to last after you cross that stage in your way-too-expensive cap and gown. What will last are the lessons you realize you've learned along the way and the excitement you feel regarding the next possible adventure.

John Riti is a senior English major from St. Louis, Mo.

Right to Farm misses mark



Sarah Muir

Missouri voters will have the opportunity to vote on a new amendment to the Missouri constitution regarding farming practices in Missouri during November 2014.

The amendment, known as Right To Farm, seeks to constitutionally protect modern farming practices throughout Missouri. While the goal of the bill seems reasonable, it is too vague and overprotects big farming industries.

The Right To Farm amendment is being pushed in response to ballot initiatives like Proposition B that restrict farming techniques, according to an April 2013 St. Louis Today article. If the amendment passes, only the Missouri Legislature would have the power to write laws regulating farming practices. Groups who oppose the bill include the Humane Society of the United States and The Missouri Rural Crisis Center.

Farming is an important part of the Missouri economy and local farmers should be protected, but the

amendment has too many flaws. The first is the language is too vague to be put into the state constitution.

The amendment states, "The right of farmers and ranchers to engage in farming and ranching practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state."

There is no definition stated of what constitutes these practices. This opens the door for any farming and ranching practices to be constitutionally allowed in Missouri and makes it hard for Missouri citizens and advocacy groups to challenge farming practices they see as harmful. While practices could be challenged legally in the courts, it would be a more difficult process than allowing for ballot initiatives.

During 2010, Missouri voters passed a ballot initiative banning puppy mills, according to a November 2010 Human Society press release. This is an example of how ballot initiatives can act as a check on the farming techniques used in Missouri. While the initiative had some problematic language as well, it later was fixed in the Legislature.

This type of ballot initiative would not be allowed if the Right To Farm amendment were passed. Ballot initiatives are a tool citizens can use to directly express their opinion about policy, and prohibiting those initiatives via a constitutional amendment seems misguided. This especially is true considering Missouri farmers haven't faced serious threats to their right to

farm, with the only challenge being the banning of puppy mills during 2010.

The amendment would over-protect big industries instead of the small farms throughout Missouri. While big farm industries are important to the American economy, there is a reason regulations and safeguards exist. Allowing these regulations to be challenged legally or circumvented by passing the amendment undoes a lot of work that already has been done to ensure public and environmental safety.

Finally, the Right To Farm amendment does not do much for a small farm anyway, meaning the costs of passing the amendment outweigh the proposed benefits. After passing the amendment, local governments still can regulate farmers throughout their jurisdiction. At the end of the day, farming practices still are regulated and controlled at some level, which means the only protection farms are getting is from public voting on ballot initiatives. Because there hasn't been any serious threat to farming practices that severely would restrict their ability to function, there's no reason to believe ballot initiatives are a big threat to a farmer.

Missouri farmers are important and should be protected, but the Right To Farm amendment is too problematic.

Sarah Muir is a sophomore political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

Should Missouri raise the minimum wage?

"I don't think we should. Based off my Econ[omics] class, it would raise prices and equal out with inflation to be the same as it is now."

Nick Merz
Freshman



"I'm good with [current Missouri minimum wage] ... the wage should increase with your skill level."

Evie Clark
Freshman



"I don't know what the consequences are of that ... I think there is some room to move it up a little bit."

Nathan Aden
Junior



"I think it'd be good for the economy and just people with their livelihoods."

Erin Jones
Freshman



AROUND THE QUAD

Raising minimum wage is bad for employment



Jessica Hack

During his State of the Union address, President Obama announced a raise in the federal minimum wage to \$10.10, hoping to build momentum for a minimum wage hike for all workers. Raising the minimum wage will be more detrimental to society than beneficial.

The goal of a business is to make the highest profit it can, and when there are barriers such as wage laws, firms must find new ways to make a profit. Rather than paying high variable costs like wages continuously, firms will invest in new innovations and machinery to make goods production more

efficient. As machines begin to do more of the necessary work, firms will lay off unneeded workers.

Raising the minimum wage might cause businesses to hire fewer people. According to a December 2013 study by economists at Texas A & M University, "The most prominent employment effect of minimum wage laws is a decline in the hiring of new employees."

Uneducated, less-skilled workers will have a more difficult time finding work if the minimum wage continues to rise. As firms are required to pay higher minimum wages, they will be less likely to hire those who do not excel in every aspect of the job.

In a July 2013 Forbes magazine article, economist James Dorn said, "The minimum wage is unfair to low-skilled workers with little experience because it prices them out of the labor market and prevents them from achieving the upward mobility that is the hallmark of a dynamic free-market economy."

Not only does the higher wage price out lesser skilled, uneducated citizens, it prices out the younger, working population. A January 2012 study by economists Joseph Sabia of San

Diego State University, Richard Burkhauser of Cornell University and Benjamin Hansen of the University of Oregon found when New York State increased the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.75 per hour from 2004 to 2006, the employment rate of younger less-educated individuals dropped by as much as 22 percent, with the greatest impact on 16 to 24-year-olds.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website, "Although workers under age 25 represented only about one-fifth of hourly paid workers, they made up about half of those paid the Federal minimum wage or less."

Among employed teenagers paid by the hour, about 21 percent earned the minimum wage or less, compared with about 3 percent of workers age 25 and older. A minimum wage increase will have the greatest effect on the large percentage of teenagers earning the federal minimum wage.

Those in favor of raising minimize wage argue doing so will aid people living below the poverty line. Supporters advocate raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 would reduce the number of people in poverty by 4.6 million, according to a January 4 Washing-

ton Post article. But raising the minimum wage will not solve the poverty problem.

Economist Jeffrey Dorfman of the University of Georgia said only 7 percent of those in poverty have a full-time job. They are not in poverty solely because they are not getting paid enough — they are there because they either work part-time jobs or cannot find jobs. Those living below the poverty line need jobs, not a higher minimum wage.

By raising the minimum wage, the United States will face more economic and social problems. Millions still will be living below the poverty line, if not more. During the current economic state of the country, it already is difficult to find full-time work. By raising the minimum wage, more jobs will be cut and those below the poverty line will have an even harder time finding work. Raising the minimum wage might help the small percentage of those in poverty with full-time jobs, but for the majority of the poor, it will make it more difficult to live comfortably.

Jessica Hack is a sophomore computer science and economics major from St. Louis, Mo.