

Individual liberty, limited government, and free markets in Wichita and Kansas

## **Kansas and Wichita quick takes: Thursday August 11, 2011**

by Bob Weeks on August 11, 2011

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**Kensinger, Brownback chief of staff, profiled.** *Kansas City Star* reporter Dave Helling has written a lengthy profile of [Kansas Governor Sam Brownback's](#) chief of staff David Kensinger. I do not know him well on a personal level, but I have attended several training sessions that he led, and they were very informative. I've also watched him preside over a contentious debate at Kansas Days, and it was remarkable to see him keep track of all the motions, substitute motions, etc. and keep the parliamentary process on track. ... The article notes disagreements between Kensinger and Kansas Senators [Tim Owens](#) and [John Vratil](#), two of the Senate's most influential members, especially Vratil, who is Senate vice-president and vice-chair of two important committees. Both of these Republican members consistently vote contrary to economic freedom, and it is thought that Vratil, in his role of vice-chair of the Ways and Means Committee, exercises great influence over big-spending Senate budgets. So when Kensinger tangles with these two — and these two are no intellectual slouches in their own right — I'm glad the conservative cause is represented by someone as accomplished as he. ... The piece in the *Star* is [Brownback's chief of staff is shaking up the Kansas Capitol](#).

**New York charter schools seen as success.** The *Wall Street Journal* calls attention to the success of a series of charter schools in New York City, where minority students from Harlem are closing the achievement gap and far outperforming white students from across the state. The schools are Eva Moskowitz's Harlem Success academies, which the *Journal* describes as “the most relentlessly attacked charter schools” — because of their success with students while operating outside the control of education bureaucrats and — importantly — the teachers unions. Concludes the piece: “Meanwhile, the battle to stop the movement continues. Ms. Moskowitz's effort to open another school on Manhattan's Upper West Side has met massive resistance. Actor Matt Damon is now throwing his celebrity against charters. Their students, meanwhile, continue upward.” Click on [Arguing With Success: Eva Moskowitz's aptly named Harlem charter schools](#) to read. ... The government school education establishment vigorously resists any expansion of charter schools in Kansas. As it is, charter schools are virtually nonexistent in Kansas. The [Center for Education Reform](#) gives Kansas the grade of “F” for its restrictive charter school law, calling it a “law in name only.”

**Morality of capitalism.** [Tom G. Palmer](#), Senior Fellow at the [Cato Institute](#), [speaks about capitalism and a new book](#) — [The Morality of Capitalism](#) — that he edited. “One of the things that’s quite striking is when you look at criticisms of the market, in many cases what they’re complaining about is interventionism and cronyism, not really capitalism. That’s a very important distinction to make. ... The financial crisis in particular is just quite evidently a failure of interventionism — trying to steer the market, and it ended up going off the rails. Now markets are trying to correct themselves and governments are struggling to not allow that to happen, with more stimulus and trying to pump up property prices, and so on.” ... Palmer said now it’s time to go on the offensive for free market capitalism. That has not been responsible for the failed policies of government. ... On the morality of capitalism, Palmer said that capitalism has been identified exclusively with self-interest, as though that was its defining feature. But people in other economic systems pursue self-interest, too. Capitalism is distinguished, he said, by a legal and moral relationship among persons: “People have the right to pursue their dream, they have the right to do what they want, with what is legitimately theirs under a system of the rule of law and equality before the law — for everybody. Not privileges for some with special powers as planners and dictators and so on, but all of us meet in society as moral and legal equals. And we trade and we exchange. The outcome of that is morally just.” ... It’s not just the greater productivity of market exchange, Palmer said. People have a right to exchange and transact freely, and the state and planners don’t have the right to tell them otherwise. ... The podcast also addresses the nature of economic competition in capitalism, which Palmer described as “constructive, peaceful cooperation.” ... On the rich, who are often criticized for exploiting others under capitalism, Palmer said that in the past and in legally under-developed countries today, rich people almost always became rich by taking or through cronyism. But under capitalism, people become rich by creating and producing, satisfying the needs and desires of others. ... Click below to listen to Palmer in this 11 minute podcast.