

Congress Should Lead by Example

To the editor:

Despite forces aligning on both sides of the healthcare reform initiative, the support for change seems universal. Our country needs to lower the percent of GDP it spends on healthcare to a level that is within a normal range for other westernized nations. It is as serious a threat to our international competitiveness as our energy dependence.

The centerpiece of President Obama's healthcare reform package is the "public option". For it to succeed, it needs to overcome two concerns – cost and quality. Addressing worries about cost will be difficult. It requires a combination of changes. Modifications to the tax code, malpractice law, and reimbursement policy are a few. Dealing with quality of care concerns is far easier. It can be solved overnight by including Members of Congress, their families and Federal Employees in the "public option".

The public option needs not "largely match" the program offered to Congress and Federal Employees, as stated by the President in his July 22nd press conference, it needs to be the same plan. People are skeptical and believe a public option, initially or over time, will offer fewer choices and lesser quality of care than other plans.

For certain, changes in health care delivery will be necessary if costs are to be reduced. If the public knows Congress, their families and Federal Employees will be covered by the exact same benefit package, they will have confidence changes will be managed so as not to weaken the quality of care.

Separating out Congress and Federal employees, as is contemplated in the proposed legislation, gives rise to very real concerns. There should be no legitimate reason for separating the programs unless Congress and Federal employees share the citizenry's apprehension about the public option. Combining these offerings will immediately stifle arguments about the public option and encourage its passage.

There is no better time to "lead by example" than now if Congress truly wishes to advance healthcare reform through a public plan offering.

Sincerely
John Powers
Amherst

Everyone Should Contribute to Cost of Health Care

To the editor:

Scare tactics and fear mongering seem to be the order of the day when it comes to the naysayers regarding health care reform. The TV ads and talk show hosts are trying to scare Americans about costs and the possibility of change. Yet in this country, we spend 16% of our GNP on health care while France, with its public and private health care system, only spends 11% of its GNP on health care; yet they have healthier citizenry with better longevity and infant survival rates. Here in NH, an employer-based family premium averages \$12,686 per year between what the employer pays and the employee pays. And costs are going up every year with expectations that they will double by 2016.

We need reform now with quality affordable health care for every American as a way of investing in our future and of providing health care security. We need choice of doctors and of insurance plans which should include a public option as well as the private plans. If people like their current insurance plans, they should be able to keep them; however, there needs to be the public insurance plan which will force competition in the insurance industry to help bring down ever-rising premiums.

Everyone should contribute to the expense of health security—business, government, and individuals. If done on a sliding scale, everyone can be in the game and benefit. We need to develop a uniquely American plan that includes standard, necessary care for all.

Nancy Iannuzzelli
Amherst

► Registration Fees

continued from page 1

Fees for boat registration will double depending on length from an additional \$24 (up to 16 feet) to \$92 (over 45 feet) on August 28th. Semi-trailers, automobile utility trailers and motorcycles will also increase.

Note that local fees have not changed.

DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Pursuant to House Bill 2 (HR2), the State portion of certain fees will be changing. HB2 amends certain statutes as listed below. Please note that the effective dates differ on some sections.

RSA 263:42, II Certified Copies of Registrations (MAP effective 8/1/09)

- The fee for a certified copy of a registration went up from \$10 to \$15

RSA 270-E:5 Boat Registration Fee (effective date August 28 2009)

- Up to and including 16 feet has increased from \$12 to \$24
- 16.1 feet to 21 feet has increased from \$17 to \$34
- 21.1 feet to 30 feet has increased from \$26 to \$52
- 30.1 feet to 45 feet has increased from \$36 to \$72
- 45.1 feet and over has increased from \$46 to \$92
- The lake restoration and preservation fee increased from \$5 to \$7.50
- The boat agent fee has increased from \$1.50 to \$5

RSA 270-E:10 Boat Registration Transfer Fees (effective date August 28, 2009)

- The minimum fee to transfer a boat registration went up from \$3 to \$5

Initial "Vanity" Plates (MAAP effective 8/1/09)

Sections of RSA 261:89 and 261:141 have been changed as follows:

- The vanity plate service fee has increased from \$25 to \$40 per year for a renewal or twelve (12) month new registration.
- The vanity number plate fee for new registrations other than twelve (12) months. Plate changes, etc. is now pro-rated at \$3.33 per month (\$40 for a renewal)

RSA 261:141 (MAAP effective 8/1/09)

Section III (g) has been changed to now assess a surcharge based on the vehicle's weight. This surcharge is in addition to the "normal" fees based on weight. The surcharge is to be printed on the registration in the State Fees section and the heading is to be listed as "SURCHARGE". The flat surcharge fee (\$30. \$45, \$55 or \$75) shall be assessed for all twelve (12) month registrations.

- 0-3000 lbs. - A \$30 (\$2.50 per month) surcharge shall also be charged, making the total State fee \$61.20 for twelve months (\$5.10 per month combined total)
- 3001-5000 lbs. - A \$30 (\$2.50 per month) surcharge shall be charged, making the total State fee \$73.20 (\$6.10 per month combined total)
- 5001-8000 lbs. A \$45 (3.75 per month) surcharge shall also be charged, making the total State lee \$100.20 (\$8.35 per month combined total)
- 8001- 10,000 lbs. - A \$45 (\$3.75 per month) surcharge shall also be charged, making the total State fee \$.96 per hundred pounds gross weight (\$.08 per hundred lbs. per month) plus \$45 (\$3.75 per month)
- 10,001-26,000 lbs. --A \$55 (\$4.58 per month) surcharge shall also be charged, making the total State fee \$.96 per hundred pounds gross weight (\$.08 per hundred lbs. per month) plus \$55 (\$4.58 per month)
- 26,001-73,280 lbs. - A \$75 (\$6.25 per month) surcharge shall also be charged, making the total State fee \$.96 per hundred pounds gross weight (\$.08 per hundred lbs. per month) plus \$75 (\$6.25 per month)

Section III (j) for semi-trailers and automobile utility trailers has changed. The flat fee (\$8, \$11, \$17, \$34 and \$46) shall be charged on all twelve (12) month registrations.

- 0-1000 lbs. has increased from \$3 to \$8 (\$.66 per month)
- 1001-1500 lbs. has increased from \$6 to \$11 (\$.91 per month)
- 1501-3000 lbs. has increased from \$12 to \$17 (\$1.41 per month)
- 3001-5000 lbs. has increased from \$24 to \$34 (\$2.83 per month)
- 5001-8000 lbs. has increased from \$36 to \$46 (\$3.83 per month)
- 8001 lbs. & greater has increased from \$.60 per hundred lbs. gross weight to \$.90 per hundred lbs. gross weight

Section III (o) for motorcycles has changed. The flat \$25 fee shall be charged on all twelve (12) month registrations.

- The fee has increased from \$15 to \$25 (\$2.08 per month)

Please note that the \$1 fee for the motorcycle rider safety fund shall still be charged.

Souhegan Students Help Out



COURTESY PHOTO

Souhegan High students in front of the Greenstone family home.

To the editor:

The Greenstone family is the partner family chosen for the new Monadnock Habitat for Humanity house in Troy NH.

On Saturday June 20th, a group of Souhegan high school students traveled almost two hours to our new home. They spent the day donating their time and energy to help us build. They started the day by cutting and lugging brush off the sides of the driveway to make way for a drainage system. Then they spent the afternoon inside helping to sand and paint our new walls. Several times throughout the day they lugged 20 gallon buckets from our neighbor's yard so we would have clean water to wash out/clean brushes and wipe down walls. In between jobs they found little moments to help keep our puppy, Pepper busy. (She slept great that night, it was refreshing to have an uninterrupted night of sleep.)

My Husband and I are impressed by how hard these young people work. Don't be fooled by the clean shirts in the picture, these students were downright grimy by the end of the day. They were also generous and good spirited despite the hard work. We would like to say Thank You. We are grateful for your hard work. You accomplished quite a bit by the end of the day.

With Sincere Thanks,
The Greenstone Family

Where Do We Go From Here?

To the editor:

During the past few months we have seen decisions made that have turned this country upside down. This is a call for all thinking Americans to wake up and establish a change from the status quo to one we can really believe in!

For example, the creation of so-called czars in the administration introduces management conflict. These are staff positions. In many cases the authority of the czars appears to infringe upon the responsibilities of various cabinet members. In lieu of the tactic of using czars, a better outcome might have been achieved by delegating the duties undertaken by czars to the constitutionally appropriate cabinet member. This would have resulted in greater transparency, greater efficiency, a recognized chain of command and lower cost. It will only be a matter of time before miscommunications and turf wars develop between the czars and respective members of the cabinet.

The recent practice by the administration of usurping shareholder rights in terminating corporate CEO's and boards of directors represents an abuse of power. At the time these actions were taken, the "bailout money" constituted a debt obligation on the part of the corporation. As such, it was not attached to voting rights, as a shareholder stake would have been. Where in the constitution is the federal government given the right to interfere to this degree in the business of any private corporation? A better practice would have been to use the bully pulpit and perhaps electronic media to shame corporate board members into performing the jobs for which they are being paid.

Bankruptcy proceedings that deprive the bondholder of his legal creditor status flies in the face of contract law as we know it in this country. Any personal injury claimant deserves the right to seek redress against the assets of the company that allegedly harmed him, not against the liquidation arm of the residual company. Our citizens deserve better.

"Cap and Trade" might work only if all carbon-footprint producing countries participate. Companies that use significant hydrocarbons in this country will pay a penalty, and that cost will be passed on to the consumer by every producer and intermediary in the distribution chain. Companies operating in countries that are not subject to "Cap and Trade" will experience lower costs and higher earnings. Therefore, companies will be tempted to relocate their operations to countries such as India and China. We could potentially lose manufacturing jobs as well as tax revenue.

Project Graduation Thank-You

To the editor:

On Friday night, June 12, following the 2009 Souhegan High School commencement ceremony, 171 graduates boarded the buses for an all night party at The Hampshire Dome. The 2009 Project Graduation event, with the most successful turnout to date (approximately 70% of the class) was supported through the generous donations of the following families and businesses in our community:

First Student, Inc., Dovetail Dental, Souhegan Cooperative School Board, Moulton's Market, Coldstone Creamery, Shari Moskowitz, Brenda Cannon, Michael and Julie Sullivan, Lawrence and Caroline Laine, Jeffrey and Kim Johnson, Sandra Comstock, Thomas and Lynne Wahle, June and William Kelso, Michael and Diane Bolton, Jim and Beth Kimberly, William and Veronica Foley, Michael and Diane Hirst, Barbara and David Belak, Bruce and Regina Kinney, Kim and Mark Ommundsen, Jeannine Readdy , Fraser and Lori Brooks, Susan and John Turben Foundation, Ronald and Catherine Jellison, Rich and Deb McKenzie, Lydia Greene, Mike White and Lori Bruno, Michael Mahar and Klasina Knibbe, Kevin Coffey, Michael and Jeanne Kennedy, John and Kerri Hagen, Robert and Sue McKenney, Alan and Deb Cort, Douglas and Renea Sparks, John O'Dowd and Yim Kim, Rick and Gretchen Schwerdtfeger, Mary Mahar and David McNamara, JoEllen Redmond, Gary and Rebecca Coffey, Geoffrey and Mary Wilson, Constantina Marshman, Daniel and Linda Gerson, Robert and Constance Fissette, Rita Henenberg, Elaine Bendeck, Denise Biddle, Rick and Kelly Gilligan, Colleen Lynch, Chris and Stephanie Jay, Ray and Cindy Dow, Richard DeWaele and Luisa Tussan , Vicki Leknes, David and Karen Lautenschlager, Heajung Kim, Scott and Aimee Chester, Don Smallwood, Kathy and Rob Brundage, Luann Senburn, Tim and MaryEllen McNamara, Allstate Insurance: Jim Parolin, The Golf Guy, Giorgio's Restaurante, Amherst Lions Club, Amigos Mexican Cafe, Walgreen's, Goodale's Bike Shop, Inc., Amherst Yoga, Applebee's Grill and Bar , Granite State Dog Center, Aurvara Salon, Hairforce Salon, Beads By Nancy, Innovations Day Spa, Black Forest Cafe, Jake's Ice Cream, The Cabinet Press, Joey's Diner, Carson City Tires, Ken Whittier, Chili's Bar and Grill, Market Basket, Cinemagic, McKenney & Bausha, PC, Souhegan High School Community Council, Merra & Kanakis, PC, Pizza Top, Controlair Inc., Mile Away Restaurant, Devtech Labs Inc., Milford Rotary Club, Dr. Edward Klopfer, PJ Currier, Dr. Kenneth Edwards, Hampshire Hills, Sal's Pizza, Amherst Junior Women's Club, Walmart, Dunkin Donuts, Mark Lawrence Photography, Party Vision, Walnut Hill Marketing, Big A Pizza, Stop and Shop, The Homestead, Domino's Pizza, Best Buy, Newcomer's Club Amherst Area, Bravo, Siobhan Dalton Coldwell Banker, Pete Ackerson: State Farm Insurance, Souhegan High School PTSA, Edward Jones Investments: Brian McGuigan, Gail Maloney Photography, Quinn Brothers, Ruddock Law Office, P.A., Seasonal Specialty Stores, Shaw's Supermarket, Inc., Zycorp, Inc., Souhegan Lighting Products, LLC, Bertucci's, Milano House of Pizza, Fodees, The Sports Authority, Toadstool Bookstore and Hungry Herb's.

The 2009 Project Graduation Committee is extremely grateful for the tremendous support of our sponsors. We know that the Souhegan High School community appreciates the importance of keeping our graduates safe on this night. Thank you for providing a happy, memorable night for them!,

Sincerely,
2009 Project Graduation Committee
Souhegan High School

Although it is generally recognized that our longer-term goal is to be free from dependence upon foreign oil, we need an interim bridge until our domestic alternative sources of energy become widely available and economic. Today's capability to obtain oil using modern technology does not suggest significant risks of spillage associated with underwater drilling. Therefore, restrictions on offshore drilling should be selectively lifted. A balance can be created between the needs of states to maintain tourism and the needs of states to balance their budgets.

In any economy, the private business sector produces wealth; the public sector only consumes the wealth created by the private sector. Such taxation by the government effectively removes assets from productive capacity. Our resources are finite; we must husband them wisely. The current trend of our legislators to increase taxes on the fifty percent of our population who pay taxes, either through expiration of the Bush tax cuts or through implementation of "Cap and Trade" and other measures, is punitive if not confiscatory and regressive. A better plan would have identified appropriate sources of revenue in advance of legislating expenditures. A study of past business cycles has proven the effectiveness of cutting taxes as a tool for stimulating economic growth.

This nation's federal budget deficit and long-term debt have soared to astronomical levels. Unfortunately, the "stimulus package" was not designed to spur economic growth or lower unemployment to any significant degree. It was merely a spending package. In the absence of economic growth a real stimulus plan would have achieved, this nation will be saddled by crippling taxation, low productivity, lackluster innovation and high debt levels for as far as the eye can see. For how long will the people of this country be satisfied with the oppressive set of policies we have allowed to develop. The horse has left the barn.

Public confidence in our economy is paramount to the health of that economy. Consumers are confused and are attempting to adapt to a new paradigm that shifts from day to day like sand under our feet. Businesses are unable to plan. They will not hire; banks will not lend, and customers will not buy. It is the responsibility of our government to create an environment in which the machinery of our economy can function, and it is the responsibility of the administration to articulate the vision for American enterprise and to inspire each citizen to be the best that he can be. We are not meeting that goal. And our president is out-of-touch.

Dan and Martha Wilkerson
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