Letters

Republicans, Trump are sabotaging the Affordable Care Act

To the editor:

“Mommy, this toy is broken. I need a new one.”

“You’re breaking it on purpose.”

Republican legislators and insurance companies have been working hard to break the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) for years. They’ve successfully defunded essential parts of it, and in states like Missouri they refused to expand Medicaid.

In conjunction with insurance companies, they’ve kept competition from the marketplaces, watched premiums and deductibles rise, and watched insurance companies leave many areas without any choices.

They declare that “Obamacare is broken!” when they sabotaged it and refused to fix it. Example?

Who raises your rates and tells you each year which doctors you can see and who is “in network”? The insurance companies do that.

On Sept. 30, Congress let lapse the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, which covered 9 million children nationwide. This program has been enormously effective, reducing the uninsured rate for kids from 14 percent in 1997 to 4.5 percent in 2015.

But because this covers poor kids, it was allowed to lapse, and now Republicans are holding it hostage. They want Democrats to agree to cut millions from Medicare to fund it again. That’s what you call a poison pill, friends. Meanwhile, CHIP funding for Missouri runs out in March.

The Trump Administration dramatically shortened the enrollment period for the ACA and defunded advertising to the public about the enrollment dates.

On Oct. 12, the president decided he would just take a sledgehammer to the ACA with executive orders. Understand that the ACA is a law passed by both houses, signed by President Obama and twice declared constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. The executive orders Trump signed will most likely be challenged in court as a result. Meanwhile, insurance companies will use “uncertainty in the markets” as their reason to raise premium prices yet again.

It may sound reasonable to “buy insurance across state lines” until you understand that your state insurance commission will provide you with zero consumer protection for a cheap policy you buy from another state.

You may think it will be OK for Trump to cut the subsidies to insurance companies for their policies sold on the exchanges until you see how the companies will dramatically increase the cost of the policies to cover their losses.

We are not talking about toys here. We are talking about real people who are desperate to be able to afford decent health care and quality insurance. This is life and death for millions of people, many millions of whom are just kids.

Bunnie Gronborg
Festus

On the same page about tax increases

To the editor:

I have to agree with the letter from Al Jeude 100 percent. The property tax increases that both the Antonia Fire Protection District (50 cents per $100 of assessed valuation) and the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office (35 cents) want would add way too much to our real estate and personal property taxes.

Add it up. People will have higher taxes and less money to spend. There is an old saying: “Money doesn’t grow on trees.” But you heard that growing up.

The fire district bought a firetruck that will not fit in the firehouse and also purchased property they never used and sold it for way less than the purchase price. Perhaps a state audit needs to happen.

For senior citizens and low-income families, these increases are not acceptable. Retired seniors have not seen a salary increase in years. Mr. Jeude said, “Enough is enough,” and I agree. Please do not support these tax increases. I cannot and will not.

Ron White
Barnhart

Tax plan would steal from the poor to benefit the rich

To the editor:

In their nine-page “framework” for tax changes, Republicans are abandoning deficit-neutral tax reform, allowing tax cuts to inflate the national debt by $1.5 trillion over a decade.

The tax cuts would overwhelmingly benefit the richest Americans. Half of the benefits would go to the highest-earning 1 percent of Americans.

The White House reasons that a tax cut will spur businesses to invest more in research and new equipment. Corporations are now sitting on huge piles of capital sitting in offshore bank accounts, not being invested.

This is just another reverse-Robin Hood plan to steal from the poor and give to the rich.

Linda Lyons
De Soto

Laws cannot rid society of crazies out to harm others

To the editor:

“Fifty-eight dead, more than 500 injured.” This was the headline after the Oct. 2 tragedy in Las Vegas.

Trying to make sense out of this senseless act is like trying to catch the wind. It just cannot be done. No matter what security measures, restrictions or laws we enact, we will not be able to fully eliminate “lone wolves.”

We have the privilege of living in the freest society in the world. The freedoms we enjoy to come and go mostly as we please are accompanied by caves.

The Oct. 2 tragedy is shocking to all, but not unexpected. We know we live in a world where terror is always present. We know not when.

This, unfortunately, will be politicized. The liberal left will blame the weapon more than the perpetrator. President Trump will be castigated for supposedly creating an environment for this massacre. The right will say that further gun laws won’t change anything.

We must understand that if we want to enjoy our freedom and individuality, actions like the tragedy in Las Vegas will repeat. There will always be crazies for whom the end justifies the means.

We must be more vigilant, but some things cannot be foreseen. Freedom is not free. We must never alter our lives to succumb to those who wish us to do so.

Vance Garber
Festus

Athletes’ words tell us they are not showing respect

To the editor:

First, I applaud our new editor, Peggy Bess, for the apparent respect she holds for Ben Franklin and the accurate dissemination of news. It’s refreshing to hear, in this age of liberal bias.

I would like to comment on two letters that appeared on Oct. 12 – one by Celestia Gaudreault (“Taking a knee is typically a prayerful pose”) and the other by Peggy Koch (“Athletes are asking us to pay attention”).

I agree that kneeling would seem to indicate a prayerful pose, and I completely agree that our country is very much in need of prayer. However, the players that she refers to made it quite clear that prayer was furthest from their minds.

Koch claims that when she sees players kneel on a football field, she does not see disrespect for our flag, she sees “respect for the God who loves us.”

By their own statements, the athletes declared they were protesting the “murderous police” and “brutality toward black people” suspected of being drug dealers. If suspects resist arrest and fight back, what’s an officer to do? Say, “I’m sorry if I have to arrest you?”

Give me a break.

Burton Hintermeister
De Soto

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