

Orangeville Citizen

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The humblest Citizen of all the land, when clad in armour of a righteous cause,
is stronger than all the hosts of Error. - WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

Lies, ignorance dominate U.S. health care debate

WE WONDER WHETHER U.S. President Barack Obama realized when he decided to make health care reform one of his top priorities.

For those of us on the "socialistic" side of the Canada-U.S. border, the criticism the President is encountering from conservative Republicans, talk show hosts and some of those attending his town hall meetings is truly mind-boggling.

It's too bad that Gallop or some other major U.S. pollster hasn't bothered to ask Canadians whether they'd ever want to return to the U.S.-style private health insurance.

Without a doubt, most Canadians would like to see less congestion in our health care system, but we at least can complain about it and rely on opposition parties to press government to take action.

Perhaps one thing that Mr. Obama's critics should be told is that although Medicare here had its roots in Saskatchewan and was pioneered by a socialist party lead by Tommy Douglas, every successful Canadian politician today supports the idea of having health care provided by provincial government agencies that monopolize the field.

There should be little doubt as to the origin of much, if not all, the criticism of what most Canadians would see as a modest move toward something approaching universal health care. It's almost certainly coming from two of the most powerful lobbies in Washington, the insurance and pharmaceutical industries.

After all, the simple fact of the matter is that although Americans are spending far more on health care per capita than Canadians, we are living longer, thanks to universal medicare.

Clearly, health insurance is so costly in the U.S. for the same reason automobile insurance costs far more than it does in British Columbia. There's clearly more efficiency in any insurance scheme that has a single, non-profit provider, even when the provider is a government agency.

Last Saturday, President Obama used his weekly radio address to supplement the town hall meetings he's been holding across the country, confronting, what he described as scary-sounding confusion that's being expressed by some in town halls where "tempers have flared."

As an example, he cited the furor over what former Alaska governor Sarah Palin labeled "death panels." One version of Congress' health care legislation suggested health insurance should be extended to include consultations with medical experts on end-of-life options such as living wills and hospices. Ms. Palin interpreted the provision as calling for "death panels" and suggested the Obama reforms were "evil."

Mr. Obama said the bill in question would merely "allow Medicare to cover voluntary visits with your doctor to discuss your end-of-life care — if and only if you decide to have those visits. It had nothing to do with putting government in control of your decisions; in fact, it would give you all the information you need — if you want it — to put you in control of your decisions."

Suggesting there should be greater concern on the health care front about maintaining the status quo, he added that "those who would stand in the way of reform will say almost anything to scare you about the cost of action, but they won't say much about the cost of inaction. If you're worried about rationed care, higher costs, denied cov-

erage or bureaucrats getting between you and your doctor, then you should know that's what's happening right now."

He suggested that more attention should be directed at the problems faced by those who, are "acting responsibly" but have been penalized in the current health care system.

"These are the stories that aren't being told — stories of a health care system that works better for the insurance industry than it does for the American people, and that's why we're going to pass health insurance reform that finally holds the insurance companies accountable."

One of the strangest complaints from the critics concerns Mr. Obama's plan to create a government-operated insurance provider that would compete with the private insurers.

The critics say this would somehow be unfair competition. The reality, of course, is that experience elsewhere has proven the contrary. In Ontario, the government's Ontario Medical Services Insurance Plan (OMSIP) was replaced by the current, monopolistic Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) in 1969 because OMSIP had to accept all the high-risk Ontarians while the private insurers concentrated on signing up groups of employees and could profit at rates set by OMSIP for individuals.

As we see it, the biggest single problem facing the proposed reforms is in the area of costs. Achieving universal health care at a time when 46 million Americans have no health insurance will be awfully costly.

Clearly, Mr. Obama will be hard-pressed to keep his commitment not to increase taxes for anyone earning less than \$250,000 a year, particularly when without it his administration is facing record annual deficits.



Is this OMB hearing really necessary?

IF ORICA CANADA'S HISTORY of accidents is as represented by the company, there would appear to be no similarity between the nature of those and what could happen at the company's East Luther site, or between it and the quarries that Orca serves.

Combining those data with the East Luther site itself and the measures the company has taken or is prepared to take to leave no doubt that the risks of explosions, accidents, breaches of security or water pollution are absent or at least minimal, one has to wonder whether the upcoming Ontario Municipal Board hearing warrants the cost thereof.

The public opposition has been based, among other things, on a perception of a threat to groundwater and to Luther Lake, as well as fears of explosions or toxic fumes in the event of a fire. There are also public concerns about security.

But while we have no argument with the public efforts to make certain the facility is subjected to public scrutiny, we cannot overlook Superior Court Justice Jane Milanetti's notation that the East Luther site had been in existence without incident for 15 years.

It would be wrong to say that there was no opposition to the facility from the time it was established in the mid-1990s, but there were no serious efforts to block its existence throughout a succession of operators.

We suspect the OMB will be curious not only about the sudden groundswell of opposition but also about why the facility has been a permitted use in the East Luther Grand Valley Official Plan if it is an unwanted use.

At this point, our strong suspicion is that a costly OMB hearing will merely take a lot of time and potentially result in a new burden for local taxpayers.

CITIZEN MAILBOX

'Profound disappointment' at closure

In reference to recent announcement of the closing of Rolling Hills Children's Centre, I feel compelled to express profound disappointment that the existence of such a dynamic and safe place for children could be in jeopardy. I am also encouraged by the support and rallying of the parents to keep the Centre operating in order to explore alternatives to closure.

When my family moved to the Orangeville area five years ago, we required summer camp for our daughter. This is her sixth summer there and it has been like going home every summer. The care has been fabulous and despite my daughter's turning 12 this summer, she was very eager to return for her last summer. The staff are like family, the atmosphere is positive and caring, unparalleled in our 12 years of searching for daycares and daycamps. At one point we attempted to switch schools in order for our daughter to attend the after-school program offered at Rolling Hills, but were not successful due to excessive enrolment.

Rolling Hills Children's Centre should not be allowed to close. This is a gem of Orangeville and is a model for well-run children's education centres everywhere, where the needs of all children are met. Perhaps there is still time for the powers-that-be to recognize what Rolling Hills has meant to

so many families in Orangeville and its surrounding areas and give this chance to many others.

Ann Baka
via e-mail

By the time you read this, the fate of my child and that of his peers may likely be determined. I was very reluctant as many people in my position are to come forward because unfortunately it's just the way it is that along with my child being judged so too are us parents sometimes by the very people we call our friends and neighbours.

I once brought a very frightened little 3 year old into this wonderful magical place called Rolling Hills Children's Place where he thrived and developed, now after 5 years how do I tell him that they are shutting the doors.

My child was identified as needing extra support while in Teddy Bear Playschool and during the brief time we had him out of care, I had my hands full with my beautiful boy who had no concept of boundaries including a phone call from my neighbour in the rear telling me my little guy made himself at home in his family room while he was playing in the backyard with his friend, it took him 5 seconds to let himself in thru an unlocked patio door and he matter of factly told the startled neighbour whom was enjoying some alone time with his wife

that he needed him to put his teletoon channel on cause he did not know how to work his remote, or even a month ago when the neighbour next door shouted over to me that he was planting corn in her backyard while playing with her children, to this day I have no idea why or how his brain works but I know it is a magical place and a very imaginative one.

I briefly took him out of care at the age of 7 thinking we could handle him now that he was older with the assistance of teenage siblings but all that did was end up with a visit from DCAFS with an anonymous complaint that he was outside in the dark, while I explained that I could not help that it was dead of winter and he was permitted to be outside till dinner as long as he was properly dressed and that I was truly sorry that at 4:30 it was dark. (My husband arrives home from work by this time), and that perhaps people should be more concerned for children whom don't come outside to play rather than the healthy ones that do. I could not lock this child away for the winter months even if I tried and tried

we did including child safety latches and bars on all the doors and windows, he took a ladder to the basement window and made his 1000th escape, while DCAFS was wonderful with us I won't lie to this day I am miffed with whoever the riotous caller was that did not have the decency to come knocking.

I am trying to remain hopeful but saddened and feel that we parents have done everything we could with what little time frame we were given to try and bring forward options to help save our children's childcare facility. It is truly a shame that in our family's quest for updates we frequently check in on the page dedicated to our children's facility on the Community Living Dufferin website and while I see a Building Dreams Together Donation Link showing they have managed to raise over 500,000.00 towards the building efforts of the gorgeous new facility, they claim they are forced to close a childcare facility for some of the most vulnerable children in this

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Involvement said needed

On August 13, 2009, I had the pleasure of attending the Melancton Township Council meeting.

The meetings are held one morning and one evening of each month for residents who are not aware of this.

We need residents to get involved, or at least go to the Melancton Township website and review the agendas and minutes to know what is going on in our community.

I certainly learn a lot each time I go to a council meeting. I take advantage of the opportunity to submit questions, at times they may seem out there, but they are an avenue to learning what is actually going on with the activities of council. It allows me to get involved.

To date at all of the meetings there has been discussion of the proposed Highlands Quarry which will be located in Melancton Township.

At the Aug. 13 meeting four individuals had the opportunity to present facts in regards to the potential impact of the proposed quarry: extreme heavy truck traffic; who should pay for technical studies, the homes that are being demolished on lands owned by the Highland

companies, resulting in potential lower tax revenue and what control council has on the township's official plan.

All of these people should be applauded for the hard work and time it took to prepare their presentations.

At the end of the presentations, I expected that the Mayor, Debbie Fawcett, or the councillors, would have some comments in regards to the content and time these people have put forth for their community.

Not so, all they received was "well, we have a lot to think about" and the council moved on to the next item on the agenda.

Has this information fallen on deaf ears? Will council have the decency to speak up? Let the ratepayers of Melancton know that they are concerned and are working on a plan to understand the proposed quarry impact before it is too late, and valuable time is lost.

I would really like to hear council's side. Or have they decided Highlands is too big and they feel they can't make a difference?

We await council's reply.
Bart Malloy
Melancton Township

Privacy vs Politics vs Policing

Regarding: Letter More to do with Politics than Policing (August 11)

Regarding: Its not a Crime to be Stupid (July 21)

I understand the intent behind the Lock it or Lose it Program as a crime prevention strategy, however I am in agreement with Fred Knetsh's wish to keep his privacy. After re-reading the three letters in question, I find that the line between privacy and prevention has become somewhat blurred. Where does it stop?

I'm sure the police mean well coming onto my property in the early hours of the morning and checking my vehicle and subsequently my personal belongings within that vehicle, however no matter how well intentioned, to me this is trespassing. Whether it was "stupid" as Mr. Knetsh suggests or I was just too "busy" like the Taylors in leaving my vehicle

unlocked, that should be my problem. If something untoward happened because of my carelessness, then it is something I would have to deal with. I really do not want "Big Brother" to be watching and checking on me. And NO I do not have anything to hide.

The Lock it Lose it Program is a program designed to prevent theft. It is unfortunate that we need to have something like this in place.

However, I think our privacy is also important. So I suggest a compromise: Please feel free to drive by as often as you like, please feel free to use the Lock it or Lose it Program for vehicles that are parked on the street or in parking lots or parks. Please protect our neighborhood, however, please do not come on my property unless invited.

S. Bosma
Shelburne