

Health care issue led astray by right wing

By Paddy Lehane
STAFF WRITER

The radical right-wing has been known to engage in some pretty sketchy behavior, but the recent character assassination attempt aimed at a 12-year-old sick Maryland boy and his family has gone leaps and bounds over the line.

Much as with the swift boat slam of John Kerry in 2004, the right wing conservative machine has been able to divide and conquer once again. By diverting attention away

from the issue of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), the machine has sent the helpful program down a road of no return.

The pure and simple fact of the matter is that there are ten million kids in this country that should've gotten health insurance. There are kids in this country that only go to the doctor when an emergency room visit is necessary.

There are parents in this country whose biggest fear is a sick kid. They know a major illness will bankrupt the family.

This smear campaign of a little boy and his family, on behalf of the über-rich insurance companies, makes me quite sick. Sick enough to go to the doctor, but not sick enough to go in without insurance.

SCHIP was the baby of the Democratic Party, but had bipartisan support. It was an initiative they thought would be easily passed.

Who in their right minds could argue with giving sick kids the ability to get better? Apparently President Bush and other neo-cons. Who would've guessed?

The Democrats in Congress fought to revive the bill and changed their tactics by putting a face to the health insurance debate. This face was that of Graeme Frost, a 12-year-old boy from Maryland, who suffered brain injuries in a car wreck that he still requires treatment for.

The Democrats brought Frost to Washington to do their weekly radio address, the official response to President Bush's.

Frost told of his plight, his need for doctor's care, and the gift his family received from being able to get insurance from the state of Maryland.

The response from the right wing was immediate and fierce. Instead on attacking the system where sick kids can't get help, the right-wingers attacked the credibility of the family.

Michelle Malkin, a conservative blogger and possible nutcase, did nothing short of calling the boy and his family frauds. A weeklong rampage of pointless information ensued.

She cited a marriage announcement of Frost's parents in the New York Times as a sign of affluence. She also claimed, she and she alone, that she was able to find cheap health insurance in the area where the Frosts live.

Republicans in the House and Senate were quick to jump on this bandwagon claiming that the family was indeed, rich and could easily afford health insurance but wanted to rip off the state.

All of the rumors surrounding the affluence of the family were debunked, and politicians, but not right-wing bloggers, then backed off. But the damage was done.

It's a shame that ten million really sick kids don't have the right, or as some are saying, the luxury, to go to the doctor when they're sick or to get surgery when they need it. Their ticket to health is being locked up in a bureaucratic closet somewhere in the Capitol.



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Room searches: nuisance or necessity

By Alana Gibson
STAFF WRITER

Students look forward to breaks as a chance to get out of the books and say goodbye to Guilford for a while. However, the week leading up to breaks can be extremely stressful, especially the last minute room preparations that have us hiding candles and coffee pots, and running to dumpsters.

To ensure that students comply with health and safety measures, Campus Life conducts inspections during fall, winter, and spring breaks. A few of these measures include disposing of trash and recycling, cleaning dishes, unplugging appliances, and locking rooms and windows.

During the break periods, college personnel inspect each room to ensure compliance with health and safety standards as described in the Student Handbook. Failure to comply with these standards results in confiscation of illegal

items, fines, and sometimes judicial charges.

Their requests seem tedious but are actually quite reasonable. If you leave trash to fester in a room over the span of a break, all kinds of pests will await your return.

It is important to turn off electrical appliances when they aren't in use because voltage surges could turn them on or cause short circuits, especially since most of us tend to overload our circuits with too many plugs. By unplugging these appliances, we are also conserving energy and saving Guilford money.

I am sure that the Campus Life staff can think of more enjoyable ways to spend their breaks than inspecting the rooms of college students. However one of Guilford's core values is community. Campus Life's intent is not to be nosey, but rather to ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

"I think what's important to keep in mind is that we don't con-

duct checks to bust people, but for the health and safety of the community," said Susanna Young, area coordinator for residence life who helps conduct these room checks. "Unfortunately we often come across policy violations that cannot be ignored because of safety and liability issues. We try to be transparent about our policies, which Campus Life e-mails to every residential student in break notices."

Campus Life is only allowed to fine open violations and they are not permitted to search a room without probable cause.

These inspections aren't an invasion of privacy. However, preparing for the inspections can be very inconvenient, reaching behind desks and dressers to unplug and then re-plug alarm clocks and such. Most students who find fault with the inspections have been fined for decorative candles, or other minor violations.

I suggest that in these situa-

tions, you conceal candles or decorative wine bottles since Campus Life will write you up even if the candle has never been lit or the label has been removed from the wine bottle now used to hold artificial flowers.

With regards to being fined for issues such as dirty dishes or garbage, clean up after yourselves. Garbage and dirty dishes left in the room attract bugs, and deserve fines.

LaToya Thomas, a senior, was fined last year when one of her suitemates left dishes in the sink during a break. Thomas and her suitemates returned to find moldy dishes and a sanitation fine.

"I was mad that I had to pay because someone didn't take care of their responsibilities," Thomas said, "but there was no way for Campus Life to know whose dishes they belonged to, so we all got fined."

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'nuff said.

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