

Socialized Medicine Is Bad Business

Hub Powell

Socialized medicine sounds like a great idea, until the fiscal and operational realities hit. Often, those who oppose socialized medicine are painted as uncaring for the "least of these" and callous toward the needs of others. Nothing could be further from the truth. As citizens of this great country, the Constitution guarantees (i.e., recognizes – not gives) the right to life, liberty (i.e., self-directed and responsible freedom) and the pursuit of happiness. It does not guarantee anything other than the right to try – try to do well, to pursue the vocation of one's calling, to live largely as one wishes, etc. The provision is that one can give life his or her best shot, but nothing other than opportunity to do so is owed to anyone.

From a business person's perspective, socialized medi-

cine might not seem so bad. After all, businesses might be able to shift the cost of providing health care insurance from their books onto those of the government's. However, one may effectively argue that the government rarely does things well and they certainly don't do things efficiently. This being the case, in the long term, if government has to pay for more health care than they already do (i.e., Medicare and Medicaid), costs shall rise or be shifted. This must subsequently be addressed via higher taxes (not a good option on an already heavily taxed population), a reduction in the services offered (i.e., one of the same "problems" the left currently argues against concerning the current quasi free-market system), a reduction in medical reimbursement to health

care providers (thus reducing both the number and quality of such), or possibly a lethal combination of the three. A major negative here is what the medical profession becomes. If socialized medicine is allowed to be enacted, yet another inefficient and ineffective government bureaucracy shall be created... Not a good option for America's businesses or her people.

Where to go from here? The Republicans (the supposed conservatives in the health care debate – truly a topic for another author to address) have set forth free-market ideas as potential solutions. Why not allow insurers to compete across state lines? Currently, it is against the law for insurance companies to do so. Tort reform? Multi-million dollar settlements may, on occasion, have a place in our

system, but should they be a norm? Those who sue and are unsuccessful should be made to pay all (i.e., both parties') legal expenses. This might do away with frivolous suits.

An original idea or two from this author to help deal with the problem. Why not incentivize low-cost options? The government could offer physicians willing to work in low-cost clinics set up by the private sector the ability to earn wages, although at a reduced rate, tax-free status for up to 10 years of service. In addition, within these low-cost clinics, clients would be required to sign a waiver capping liability issues (i.e., medical malpractice) at \$100,000 and enforce this cap by law. This would decrease operational costs via reduced malpractice insurance rates (currently a huge

issue in medicine and a major driver of costs). Why not encourage capable students to study medicine by offering a quid pro quo? The cost of a medical school education (public or private), could be financed/encouraged via the forgiveness of government-backed student loans in exchange for 5+ years of low-cost clinic service. Finally, incentive pharmaceutical companies with targeted tax reductions for effective R&D in the development of new medications.

There are no easy solutions to the current debate. If this author could start anew, nearly every law, rule, and regulation would be erased from the books. Let the free market, in its truest form, develop an effective health care system. Unfortunately, short of complete revolution, this, most likely, is not a viable option.

Tea Time?

Jared Nielsen

Tax time is coming around again and many Americans are outraged at the tremendous amount of money our government wastes. Those who go to work everyday, trying to earn a living, provide for their family, and pursue their dreams are frustrated that so much of their hard-earned money ends up going down a black hole of government spending.

Government waste takes many forms and is often the result of poor management, carelessness, and fraud. According to an April 2005 article in *The Heritage Foundation*, by Brian M. Riedl, a Senior Policy Analyst and Grover Hermann Fellow in Federal Budgetary Affairs, superfluous and redundant programs, overspending, credit card abuse, government funding of non-existent institutions, and "missing money" are among the top ten examples of government waste.

"The unreconciled transactions" notes the article concerning a missing 25 billion dollars, "are funds for which auditors cannot account. The government knows that \$25 billion

We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.

-Winston Churchill

was spent by someone, somewhere, on something, but auditors do not know who spent it, where it was spent, or what it was spent on. The unreconciled \$25 billion could have funded the entire Department of Justice for an entire year." Not only are taxes going up to cover the government's mistakes, but the national debt is skyrocketing as well. Currently standing at \$12.3 trillion, our nation debt increases at a rate of \$3.88 billion per day. That comes out to \$1.4 trillion every year. Things do not seem to be getting better.

According to an October 16th, 2009 *USA Today* article, the budget deficit for the 2009 fiscal year tripled 2008's deficit, which previously held the record for largest deficit. Each American citizen's share of the national debt is over \$40,000, according to the U.S. National Debt Clock, which measures nation debt by the minute.

Some people are tired of

letting their money continually go to waste.

Named after the famous "Boston Tea Party" of 1773, proud Americans have started to protest by having "Tea Parties" around the country. These large events are estimated to have drawn over 310,000 people. In 2009 protests were held in over 750 cities. Demonstrators call for responsibility, tax reduction, and a smaller government. The Tea Party Patriots, an organization responsible for much of the Tea Party Movement, holds events all around the country to raise awareness of government waste and support the traditional values found in the Constitution. This year, on April 15th, a huge Tea Party is being held in Washington D.C. that is likely to draw thousands of Americans who want a responsible government based on the Constitution and not on greed and corruption.

Montreat College Celebrates Law Day

Carlin Eve

Law Day in the United States is May 1. To help celebrate Law and the Legal Profession, Montreat College will be having a series of events the last week in April at the Main campus, and at the two SPAS campuses,

the one in Charlotte, and the one in Asheville. The events will include meeting representatives from law schools, conversations with lawyers, door prizes, cake and the announcement of winners of the essay writing contest "Why Study Law?"

All Students from Montreat College's campuses (both SAS and SPAS) are invited to attend the upcoming Law Day events. Exact dates and times of these events will follow in a later article. Moreover, all students are invited to enter the essay writing contest. There will be three winners selected from the essay writing competition. There will be one Montreat student winner

from the main campus, one Montreat student winner from the Charlotte campus, and one Montreat student winner from the Asheville campus. Each winner will receive \$50.00.

The rules of the essay writing competition are the following: Montreat College students are invited to write a 500 word essay in response to the question: "Why Study Law?"

The essays must be e-mailed to Eve Carlin, J.D. at ecarlin@montreat.edu by April 9, 2010. Each essay must have the student's name on top, whether they are a SAS or SPAS student, their e-mail addresses, and their phone numbers. The essays will be reviewed by a panel of judges comprised of Montreat College faculty, administrators, and staff. The three winners will be announced at the Law Day events at the end of April.

