

# Answer to Medicaid in our back yard

**THE ISSUE** | A bill to crack down on Medicaid fraud.  
**OUR OPINION** | State Sen. Tom O'Mara knows he has the answer to the state's faltering entitlement right in his back yard.

If New York state lawmakers are ever going to get beyond lip-service and actually lighten the burden of mandates they place on local governments, then Medicaid is the place to start.

New York has the most expensive Medicaid program in the country and one of the most mis-used. It is further flawed by being one of the few nationwide that requires counties to pay into the entitlement and, to add insult to injury, must do so without any decision-making authority.

Needless to say, New York's Medicaid program is a nightmare and would require numerous corrective measures to operate efficiently. One that could begin almost immediately involves attacking Medicaid fraud and misuse.

We've previously hailed the benefits of special software produced by Horseheads-based Salient that roots out Medicaid fraud based on the savings it has produced in Chemung County. A handful of other counties have caught on and are now using the software, too.

It's time this detection system went statewide and that's what state Sen. Tom O'Mara is proposing to do. The Big Flats Republican has sponsored a bill to reimburse counties the cost of buying the cutting-edge computer software saying it could sniff out millions, and possibly billions of dollars in Medicaid fraud and waste.

Even though widespread misuse of the program has gone on for years, the state has been slow to respond. The state ranks 26th in the nation in Medicaid fraud recovery, three times less than states like Missouri and North Carolina that spend only a fraction of what New York does on the program.

The Salient software is the tool the state needs to crack down on program misuse and state lawmakers should get behind O'Mara's plan to get it done.

## OTHER VIEW | S.J. MERCURY NEWS

### Is this really news?

The release of President Barack Obama's long-form birth certificate was about the least illuminating "news" development imaginable, at least to inhabitants of the reality-based community.

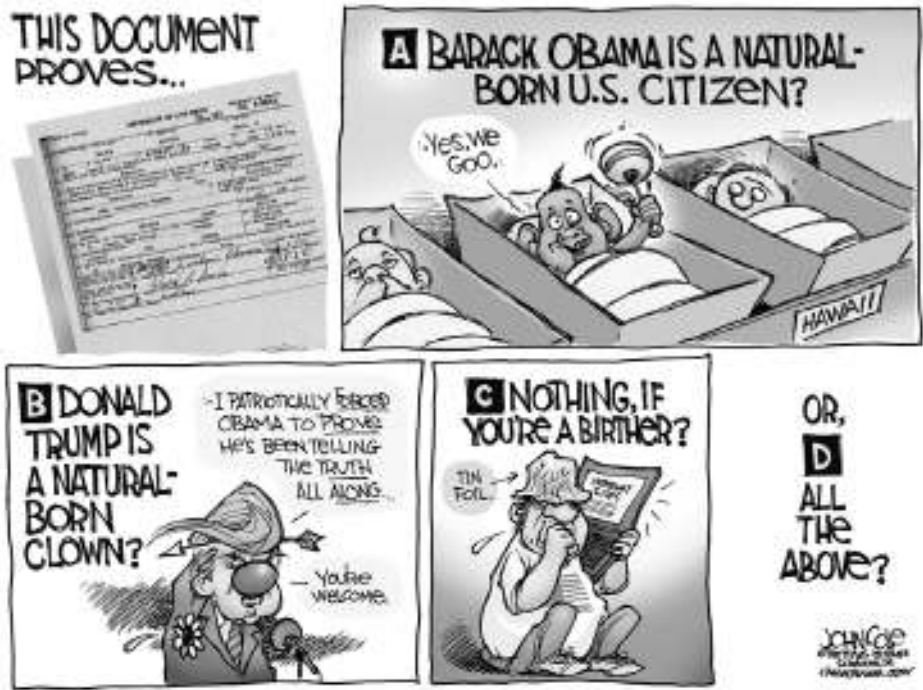
It's only those who traffic in racially driven lies – and those who seek political gain from those lies – who may have to adjust their world view. How these "carnival barkers," as Obama called them, respond to the release will be enlightening.

So far, it doesn't look like much will change. Not a single Republican leader took the opportunity Obama provided to denounce the birther smear and declare the matter dead. Instead, many actually seemed to blame Obama for responding to the issue their candidates have relentlessly flogged.

"What President Obama should really be releasing is a jobs plan," declared Mitt Romney. Sarah Palin accused the president of trying to distract from the Fed chairman's news conference. Joseph Farah, one of the key purveyors of this nonsense and an adviser to Donald Trump, said there were still "dozens of questions" about the president's citizenship. And there was deafening silence from politicians who have tried to appease birthers without actually endorsing their views, using loaded phrases like "I take the president at his word." Sigh.

None of this should be surprising, given that this has never been about the president's birth certificate. It has always been about his race, about the belief – rooted in centuries of shameful American history – that he is not "one of us." To many Americans, Obama's presence in the Oval Office is a source of great pride. To others, it's a sign the country has gone off the rails. No amount of proof can ever change that view, which means the GOP will continue to find new and creative ways to capitalize on it.

## ARTIST'S VIEW



## COMMENTARY | MATT SCHOFIELD

### The birthers missed it

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Donald Trump.

Before he harrumphed his way into the national political discussion, the whole "birther" issue had pretty much vanished from rational discussion. Columnists didn't want to write about it. Outside of a very few even on Fox News, the chattering classes were giving it a wide berth.

And then, in steps The Donald and gives it the sort of treatment the folks who believe in it think it deserves, so now, of course, everyone is talking about it again.

About time. I, for one, had missed it.

In fact, I wonder if we're not missing the real issue here.

Sure, there are "facts" indicating Barack Hussein Obama was born in "Honolulu, Hawaii" on Aug. 4, 1961 (Wait, he's younger than me? Aw, man ... Another reason to doubt). There's the "birth certificate" that Hawaiian officials have verified and re-verified as not only being authentic but of having been in their vital records, well, since he was "born." For what that's worth, the thing is green. GREEN!

And it doesn't say Muslim or socialist anywhere on it. Not even in the fine print.

Just his name, his mom's name, his dad's name, the date and location. Come on, people, that's the sort of thing you'd expect for a baby, not a president.

And, of course, there are the 1961 newspaper birth

announcements, wherein they note that Mr. and Mrs. Barack H. Obama have had a son. (Really, we're expected to believe that because A Barack H. Obama in Hawaii had a son on August 4 it's THIS Barack H. Obama?)

And then, there's the tale of Hawaii obstetrician Rodney West, who back in 1961 told of delivering the alleged Barack H. Obama at Kapi'olani Medical Center. Seriously, how did he know the baby he delivered was actually delivered there, in Hawaii, for the first time?

But, if we can dismiss such "evidence" and I think we safely can, it raises a question that goes well beyond that asked by Trump and the birthers. The question isn't "Was Barack H. Obama born in the United States?" No, if we rightly toss out the above notions, the real question is, "Was Barack H. Obama born at all?"

It's simple, really: If Obama's camp (cabal) is incapable of bringing forth proof beyond this sort of flimsy nonsense, is there any reason to believe he was born anywhere?

I know, the pedantic among you will clamor, "Well, he's here, isn't he?" OK, it's clear what side you're on.

Yeah, that's exactly what they would want you to think. They would want you to think rationally and logically.

But how do we know he's not a machine, sent back from the future?

You know, to destroy us all. And destroy the freedoms we cherish.

Freedoms like, say, the

freedom to be as nutty as the day is long.

It's just like when critics rightly call Obama a wannabe socialist dictator, and you look at what he's actually done and say, "Uhm, that's nothing at all like socialism. I mean, no more so than any collective societal effort would be socialist."

Because, if creating a health care plan that relies almost exclusively on private insurance plans is socialist, then so would be banding together to build a highway, or fund an army to protect "national interests." Which means we're in trouble. We've long since gone over to the dark side.

Makes sense that anything benefiting a wider society is socialist. I mean, the words even start out with the same four letters.

So, equally clearly, Obama has been socialist-ing all over the place.

Too many folks – and the birthers, and The Donald know this very well – simply can't see this sort of truth.

Don't you feel foolish, playing into their hands like that?

So, the question you've got to ask yourself, and for which you should demand an answer from yourself, is this: Are you willing to stand idly by while the first cyborg president of the "United States" continues to drag us into the deepest pits of socialist hell?

Well, maybe you're willing. But The Donald isn't.

■ **Matthew Schofield is a columnist for the Kansas City Star.**

## OTHER VIEW | LOS ANGELES TIMES

### Just too hot for the courts

Despite the rants of some conservative politicians and fringe scientists, it's a fact that greenhouse gases produced by human activity contribute to global warming. Last week the Supreme Court considered one way that such emissions might be controlled: through a huge and unwieldy lawsuit brought by California and five other states against five power companies and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Several justices expressed skepticism about the suit, but if the court rejects it there will still be opportunities to abate greenhouse gases.

Though the justices and lawyers traded esoteric legal terms, the important arguments concerned whether the states had a right to sue and what the role of the courts should be in controlling emissions. One

problem for the states is that they grounded their suit not in the Clean Air Act but in the common-law notion that the courts should step in to address the "public nuisance" created by the defendants' emissions. The lawyer for the power companies said – and the justices seemed to agree – that the court's authority in this case was displaced by that of the Environmental Protection Agency.

A related weakness of the case is that the lawsuit would make the courts the regulator of first resort. As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg put it, the states would "set up a district judge, who does not have the resources, the expertise, as a kind of super EPA."

This case is different from a 2007 decision in which the court ruled that the EPA had the

authority from Congress to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. In that case, which concerned emissions from cars, the ruling was anchored to a statute and the court's role was to interpret the statute. The finding that the EPA could regulate greenhouse gases has had practical consequences: The Obama administration has begun the rule-making process for such regulation.

The regulatory process is not, however, immune to politics. Because the EPA ultimately derives its authority from an act of Congress, the Republican majority in the House of Representatives has tried to strip the agency of the authority to regulate greenhouse gases. The Senate should continue to resist that regressive effort.

### Hard times don't limit donations

What constitutes an economic "recovery" seems to depend on who you're talking to.

The government says times are getting better as do the savants that keep watch on the various economic indicators.

#### THE INSIDER



Bob Rolfe

But if you ask the average person in this part of the world if times are improving, they'd probably look at you with a

blank expression.

Sure, Corning Inc. is doing well and making more money than in recent quarters. Its employees generally are smiling as are the companies with which it does business.

Still the average person in this part of the world will tell you that the great recovery has yet to take root.

Therefore, it's somewhat difficult to explain why the United Way of the Southern Tier set records when local residents ponied up more than \$4.5 million for its 2010 fund campaign.

The actual total was \$4,533,643 and that represented a gain of \$134,631 from 2009.

That broke the old record, set in 2008, by nearly \$5,000.

Officials of the United Way and its member agencies are all smiles, I'm sure, and they have every right to be.

Still with gas topping \$4 a gallon at several area stations it's hard to understand how so many people could come up with so much money for an admittedly very worthy cause.

Fiscal experts tell us that the country keeps marching into prosperity and that forward progress will continue unless there's a huge surge in the price of oil.

That, although possible, is not likely, economists say.

So good times, while not exactly around the corner, at least have a spot far later down the national agenda.

•••  
The Insider is a well-known auto racing devotee. But fewer people know he is also a follower of the National Hockey League.

My team is the New York Rangers and I'm still in mourning after their ouster in the first round of the playoffs. But the Rangers' collapse was really no surprise given the history of their decidedly up and down regular season.

There were days when they had it; and more when they did not.

Nor was I also surprised at the fall of the Buffalo Sabers to the Philadelphia Flyers.

The Flyers, I believe, are a much stronger team with considerable more depth than the small market Sabers.

I doubt many people were that surprised when the Montreal Canadiens pushed the Boston Bruins to a deciding seventh game of their series because both are strong teams despite occasional regular season hiccups.

I'm not a great follower of the NHL's Western Division so I identify with none of their teams.

That leaves me then with the Flyers as my favorite for as long as they last.

I well remember the glory days of Bobby Clark and the Broad Street Bullies when the Flyers were the toughest team anyone had ever seen.

Can history repeat itself?

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